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The Balcony Scene from *Romeo and Juliet* as given at the Champaign, Illinois, High School (Thespian Troupe No. 106). Miss Marion Stuart, director.

VOL. XIII No. 3

A National Publication Devoted To Dramatics in the Secondary Schools

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MAY, 1942



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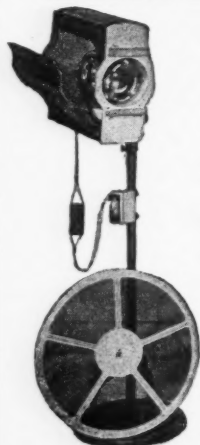
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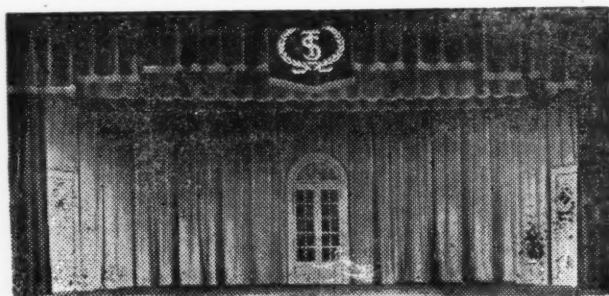


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1. Harry Neizgoda chosen Best Thespian at the Farmington, W. Va., High School. 2. Cast for *Penrod* at the Reitz High School of Evansville, Indiana. (Thespian Troupe No. 474.) Miss Mildred Karch, director. 3. Joan and Jean Randolph, Best Thespians for Troupe No. 59 of the Danville, Ill., High School. 4. Scene from *Dreams of Death*, Senior Class play at the Florence, Colo., High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 28.) Directed by Mr. Richard Phillips. 5. "Oski-Wow-Wow" mascot for Thespians at the Revere, Mass., High School. Mr. Oski journeyed all the way from Revere to Bloomington, Indiana, last June to attend the First National High School Drama Conference. 6. Scene from *Senor Freedom* as given by Troupe No. 240 at the Lubbock, Texas, High School. 7. Players in *Jack and the Beanstalk* (Act I) at the Aurora, Nebr., High School. 8. Stage setting for *Smilin' Through* at the Gettysburg, Pa., High School. (Troupe No. 95.) 9. Scene from *Duding the Ducats* at the Woodrow Wilson Junior High School of Port Arthur, Texas. 10. Cast for *Stage Door* at the Spanish Fork, Utah, High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 25.) 11. Joy Laft, Best Thespian at the Ord, Nebr., High School. (Troupe No. 328.) 12. Thespians Shirley Miller, Junior Hawkins, and Daisy Hawkins, leading players in *Stage Door* at the Spanish Fork, Utah, High School. Directed by Miss Jayne Evans. 13. Best Thespian Wm. Buford of Troupe No. 164 at the Marysville, Tenn., High School.

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THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN

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Broadway at a Glance

by MARGARET WENTWORTH

Broadway Drama Critic, New York City

Jason

PROBABLY the best play the last month has brought us is *Jason*. This comedy, by Samuel Raphaelson, author of *Skylark* and *Accent On Youth*, has had the unusual fate of changing its leading man twice and its heroine once. A play requires a good deal of vitality to survive such major operations but they have only improved *Jason*.

Jason Otis, a drama critic, really seeks the golden fleece of genius among all the wool-packs dumped down for his inspection. Sensitive and introverted, he is dissatisfied in spite of his recent marriage to his lovely Lisa who boasts her descent from one of the first families of Virginia. We feel that the lady protests too much and soon we find that she is putting on an act: her real past was that of a poor white working in a cotton mill, barefoot.

Mike Ambler, the playwright who unmasks her pretensions, knows poverty because he, too, was born to it. He has some of the traits of Saroyan; a belief in his own genius bumptiously expressed, alternates with stark terror at the thought that his first play, about to be put on Broadway, may be killed by adverse criticism. Jason enjoys Mike's informality which brings characters into his home whom he would never have met: but he is naturally angry when he catches the irresponsible playwright making love to his wife. However, Jason's critical integrity triumphs over the male animal in him and he is generous in his review of his rival's play. Lisa was only temporarily dazzled by Mike; real love for Jason combines with her dread of poverty to make her stay with her husband.

Lee J. Cobb, the present Jason, is excellent in the part; just as good as he was in the inarticulate Polack in *Clash By Night*. Helen Beverley, his wife off-stage, is a charming Lisa. Mike Conte is the incarnation of Mike Ambler. Some clever comedy scenes introduce the strange people Jason and Mike bring to the former's house. The adjective above all others that fit *Jason* is civilized.

A Kiss For Cinderella

CHERYL CRAWFORD has revived Barrie's *A Kiss For Cinderella*, with Luise Rainer in the title role. Since Miss Rainer is an Austrian, it throws the whole play out of focus to have her taking the thoroughly cockney part of Miss Thing, in which I remember Maude Adams. Then, too, in this war, Cinderella's chances of offering food and shelter to the destitute children she gathers in are even slimmer than in the last. The second act of the play is a dream se-

quence of the ball as Cinderella's imagination is able to conceive it. Ralph Forbes as the policeman and Cecil Humphreys as Mr. Bodie are so completely English that it seemed to make Miss Rainer more glaringly foreign. Barrie's whimsy is something you either like very much or cannot stand. Most of the reviewers found the play cloyingly sweet.

Nathan The Wise

ANOTHER revival is of a much older play. Lessing's *Nathan The Wise*, freely translated by Ferdinand Bruckner, is being given for the first time in English. It is laid in the time of the Third Crusade and employs the device of having a Templar fall in love with the (adopted) daughter of Nathan, a wealthy Jew. Marriage with a Jewess is unthinkable to him. (As a matter of historical fact, Templars took vows of celibacy.) But matters are no better when it is revealed that the girl was in fact a baptized Christian saved by the Jew after her parents' death. For his taking her in, he might be burned alive. Jew and Templar plead their cause before Saladin and Nathan's argument for religious and racial tolerance is eloquent and convincing. While the play has little action it is presented with great beauty and dignity. Lessing's plays were burned by the Germans. How proud it would make any author, if he could know that his work was still a danger to prejudice and bigotry after a hundred and fifty years.

Johnny 2 x 4

JOHNNY 2 x 4 was so named because that expression was used during the '20s of a man who played on a midget piano. The Johnny of the title owned a "speakeasy" in the days when prohibition made it prosperous. The atmosphere of drinking, gambling, dance and song is well conveyed. However, we see knock-out drops administered, hear of a hijacking and two or three murders. We are told that Johnny is a good sort, loyal to his friends, but we dislike his friends and so are not enthusiastic about him. The part is well played by Jack Arthur, who plays and sings easily and pleasantly.

Johnny Doodle

JOHNNY DOODLE is far less finished but is a more novel and interesting form of entertainment. This Johnny, played by Art Smith, is captain of an old ferry-boat, about to start on her last trip, with an assorted lot of passengers. Instead of taking them straight across the

river, Johnny steers the boat backward through American history. Simple costumes are so ingeniously contrived that they can be changed on stage with no delay. Each episode is accompanied by the characteristic, lusty songs of the period. Effective scenes show the resentment against the tea tax, the trek West, the digging of the Erie Canal and the building of the railroads. The inevitable impersonation of Lincoln was not very good and there were curious gaps, probably due to copyright restrictions: but it seemed odd to have none of Stephen Foster's melodies, none of the Civil War ditties and none from 1914-'18. At all events the trip through the past inspires Johnny and his passengers to steam into the future without doubts or fears.

Miscellaneous

HELLZAPOPPIN and *Sons O' Fun* proved that there is still a market for vaudeville, so it has been brought back in *Priorities Of 1942*. With Paul Draper's superb dancing and three of our major comics in it—Phil Baker, Lou Holtz and Willie Howard—it got off to a flying start and has been playing to full houses ever since.

Stage Charities

THE following plays have given special matinees for high school students this fall: *Life With Father*; *My Sister Eileen*; *Arsenic And Old Lace*; *Junior Miss*, and *A Kiss For Cinderella*.

This service for students is new but the stage's charities, new and old, are many. The oldest, the Actors' Fund, has cared for sick and aged members of the profession for more than fifty years. Every successful play of each season gives a benefit for this foundation. During the last war Rachel Crothers created the Stage Relief which concentrates on the unemployed, making small loans, providing clothes in which to apply for a job and costumes to wear if one is obtained. From this grew the Actors' Kitchen where substantial meals are served at cost or free when pockets are empty of everything except an Equity card.

Now the Stage Door Canteen for men in uniform has been started where actresses dance with their guests, light refreshments are served and fine floor shows are put on, all free. Occasionally the public is allowed to come and pay for tickets to enable the work to carry on.

One of the most touching of recent performances was an intimate revue called *Gratefully Yours* in which fifty-four children of British actors and actresses took part, directed by Constance Collier. The proceeds from this went to the American Theatre Wing War Relief and the British and American Ambulance Corps.

Jo Mielziner

by BARNARD HEWITT

Chairman, Dramatics Committee, Brooklyn College, Brooklyn, N. Y.

A FEW years ago, when Broadway saw a number of plays staged with little or no scenery, and commentators on the theatre were discovering a "trend," an inquiring reporter anxious to stir up some controversy on the question of scenery, buttonholed Jo Mielziner and asked his opinion about this "trend" which if it grew might put the designers out of business. Mielziner answered: "For me the question is not, 'Is there any scenery in this theatre?', but, 'Is there any theatre in this scenery?'"

This was more than a witty remark; it was a statement of Mielziner's attitude toward the art of scene design. Though he was first trained to be a painter in oils and he still practices easel painting as an avocation, his approach to scene design has always been that of a man of the theatre. How much or how little scenery does not concern him. Rather, he is concerned with how useful the scenery can be to the production as a whole. Scenery which impresses as scenery, he believes, does so only in the first few moments after the curtain rises and before the audience's attention has been caught and held by the actors. Scenery designed for such initial effectiveness may be entirely inappropriate to much of the rest of the play. (One is reminded here of Jones' proposal that the scenery be removed after those first few minutes.) Mielziner says: "I wish to design a setting for the key scenes, the critical moments of the play, for the moments when the audience has forgotten that there is any scenery on the stage at all."

Combined with his determination to make the setting an active if unassertive element in the production, is a strong awareness of the practical conditions of production, of "the back wall and the backer," as Mielziner puts it. The depth of the stage or the height of the backer's bankroll, the director's scheme for moving and grouping the actors, the time required to shift from one setting to another, any one of these conditions may be a deciding factor in determining the form of

Mielziner scenery. *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* provides an excellent example, because Mielziner designed two sets of scenery for this play, one under ordinary conditions for its first run. Then the Playwrights Company decided to use the play as an experiment in popular-priced theatre. Operation costs had to be cut all along the line. The original production with complete box settings required too many stage hands to shift them. Mielziner's second settings, though retaining the quality of the originals, cut down all along the line. Side walls were omitted in the interior settings and the backwalls were so designed that they could be flied.

The essential practicality of Mielziner's approach has made him one of the busiest of American designers, and perhaps the most versatile. He has never been typed. He has designed settings for such modern serious plays as O'Neill's *Strange Interlude*, Rice's *Street Scene* and *Flight to the West*, Howard's *Yellow Jack*, Anderson's *Winterset*, and Hellman's *The Watch on the Rhine*. With equal success, he has set modern comedies like Molnar's *The Guardsman*, Raphaelson's *Accent on Youth*, Booth's *The Women*, Behrman's *No Time for Comedy*, and Crothers' *Susan and God*. His talents have been employed on period plays: *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Ethan Frome*, and on modern poetic plays: *High Tor*, *Journey to Jerusalem*, and *Daughters of Atreus*. He designed *Hamlet* for Guthrie McClintick's production in which John Gielgud starred, *Romeo and Juliet* for Katharine Cornell, and *Antony and Cleopatra* for Tallulah Bankhead. Perhaps the full extent of Mielziner's versatility is to be seen in his work for musical shows. *On Your Toes*, *I Married An Angel*, *The Boys From Syracuse*, and *Stars in Your Eyes* are only a few of the more recent musicals for which Mielziner has designed the scenery.

It would be unjust, however, to suggest that practicality and adaptability alone are responsible for Mielziner's popularity as a designer. He is an artist as well as a crafts-

man. Guthrie McClintick, for whom Mielziner has designed so many productions, sums up well these deeper qualifications: "Jo Mielziner has a sense of the dramatic, and the vision of the authentic artist."

Mielziner comes honestly by his artistic vision. His father was a painter and he was born in his father's studio in Paris. He received a general education at Penn Academy, and then studied painting at the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, the Art Students League, and finally abroad. He served his apprenticeship in stage design with Max Reinhardt in Germany and with Joseph Urban in America. He acted for a season with Jessie Bonstelle's stock company in Detroit (the same company in which Katharine Cornell, Ann Harding, and many other actors learned the fundamentals of their art) and he played small parts on Broadway for a time, in the Theatre Guild's production of *Saint Joan* among others. A number of our designers have acted at one time or another, but few feel as Mielziner does, that the experience has been invaluable in designing scenery. His first Broadway job was *The Guardsman*, in 1924, with Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne starring. Since then he has been prodigiously active, designing production after production in rapid succession.

As we have seen, Mielziner wants to know before he begins work on a play the special conditions under which it is to be produced. If the show is to go into a small theatre, he wants to know how small. Mielziner regards these not so much as limitations as rules of the game. When he knows the rules, he turns to the script. As he reads, he prefers, like Geddes, to skip whatever description of the setting may appear in the stage directions. He says: "Often the designer knows better than the writer what the scene should look like when translated onto the stage." Once he would have created directly from his reading a picture of the setting, much as Robert Edmond Jones does, but now he reads, consciously picking out and attempting to visualize the actors in the most im-

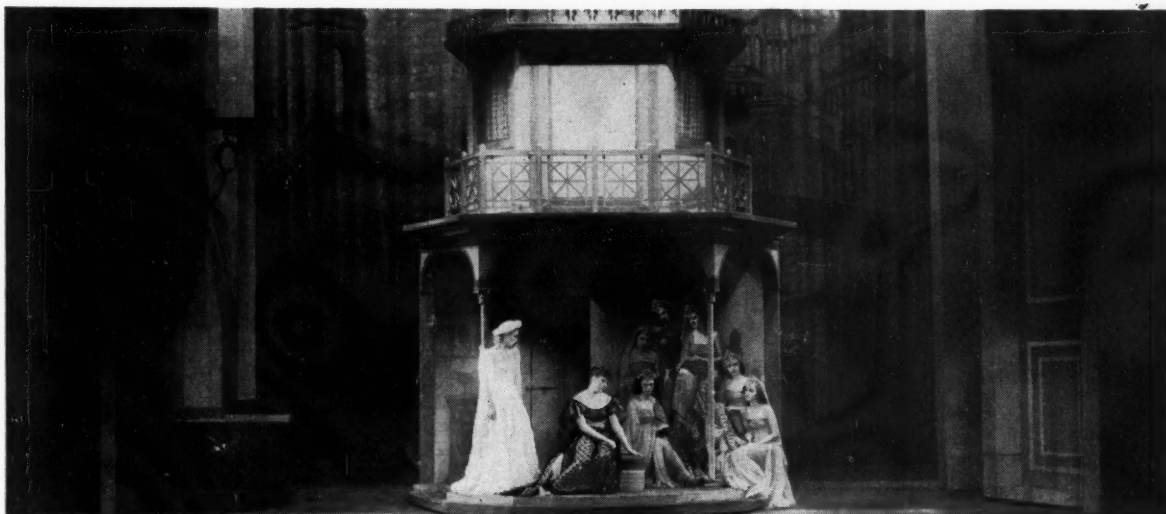
Scene from the musical comedy, *Best Foot Forward*. Stage set designed by Jo Mielziner.

(Photo courtesy Vandamm Studio)



Scene from the musical comedy, *The Boys From Syracuse*, setting by Jo Mielziner. The set piece in center revolved and moved up and down stage.

(Photo courtesy Vandamm Studio)



portant situations. He hunts in the lines for clues to the atmosphere and background. One of these clues will give him an idea for a significant piece of furniture, a quality of light or shadow, a color combination. This idea is seldom an entire setting, "just something that is associated with the dramatic significance of the moment, but which may become the clue to, or indeed the cornerstone of, the whole setting." A setting built on such a cornerstone, he believes, will best serve the high points of the play.

When Mielziner has found such a key to his setting, he is ready to work on paper. Here two elements in his early training combine to shape his method. He learned figure-painting from his father, and his acting experience gave him a strong realization of the actor's importance in the stage picture. He begins by drawing not architectural forms but various groups of figures, because "the relation of the human form to the setting and to the furniture, the relation of a person to a doorway, to an opening, to light, is more important than any amount of architectural detail. This, he points out, is one of the important differences between interior decoration and stage decoration: "In the theatre where a thousand eyes are fixed upon a woman as she sinks into her chair on the stage, the line of that chair, its color, its mass, must be carefully calculated with relation to her figure."

At this point he tests his sketches again by the size of the stage, the number of settings to be shifted, the required construction, and other practical conditions, and solves whatever problems may appear by means of a few rough floorplans. Then he sets to work on a complete sketch in color, including actors in action in the setting, indications of lighting effects, "twenty-eight feet of theatre dust and everything that contributes to the final illusion." As he draws, he thinks constantly in terms of three dimensions—that is, when he draws a column, he keeps in mind that it will stand fifteen feet from the footlights, a particular chair that will be placed only

four feet from the footlights. Thus he achieves in his sketches strong effects of solidity and depth. When he has completed the color sketch, he draws the final floorplans and working drawings himself. He has never been able to leave this detailed work to assistants, as some designers do.

He makes a scale model only when the production requires a great many platforms, or when the setting presents a difficult problem in relating the human figure to masses in the side wall. Even then the model is never completed and seldom even painted. He maintains a darkroom equipped with colored lights, in order constantly to check under the conditions of stage lighting the colors in sketches prepared for the scene painters and in materials to be used in drapes and costumes. The lighting he considers so important that whenever possible he supervises it himself.

When time permits, like most scene designers, he often designs costumes as well. It is significant of his conception of the place of scenery in the whole production that when he does design both he tries to decide on the costume color scheme *before* he selects the colors for the scenery. The costumes strike the note; the scenery supplies the accompaniment.

Mielziner has succeeded in raising the realistic setting to heights of true dramatic expressiveness. Robert Littell wrote in *Theatre Arts Monthly* of his setting for Elmer Rice's *Street Scene*, "the grim, shabby, melancholy beauty of the old brownstone facade . . . overhangs the story, and folds its strong arms about the play like some inscrutable, malevolent, urban God. The tenement, instead of being a mere architectural adornment in the background, as so many other directors and designers would have made it, seems to be set almost on the edge of the stage, and rises from a narrow sidewalk up into the darkness of the flies like a beehive cliff." In many ways his settings for *Winterset* were just as realistic and yet Mielziner managed to express in them poetic quality

of Anderson's modern tragedy.

He has been particularly ingenious in setting the play of many scenes. Elmer Rice's play of Manhattan, *Two On An Island*, required eleven different metropolitan settings. Mielziner skeletonized subway, bus, taxi, lunchroom, nightclub, etc., suggesting each locality by a few characteristic lines, and set them in front of a backdrop on which appropriate background forms could be projected. He used projected scenery to set another multi-scened play but with entirely different effect in Anderson's *Journey to Jerusalem*. Here he combined projections with largely abstract three-dimensional scenery, steps, walls, columns, etc., and achieved a dignity and poetic beauty which added greatly to the production. When he was commissioned to set Sidney Howard's *Yellow Jack* he realized that despite the play's realistic character continuity of action was essential. He designed for its many scenes a simple permanent arrangement of steps and platforms which provided a variety of playing levels. A cage on the top level which could be opened to serve as the doctor's office was the only remotely realistic element. A minimum of properties, changes in light, and the shifting of the acting area provided the necessary indications of change of scene without interruption to the action.

When George Abbott made Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors* into a musical comedy called *The Boys From Syracuse*, Mielziner devised other means of changing the scenery before the eyes of the audience. He placed his scenery on turntables and sliding platforms so that it moved on and off, upstage and down, and revolved, all in full view. In fact, its movement became a part of the entertainment.

When one considers the great quantity of Mielziner's work for the American theatre and its generally high level of excellence, one cannot but be impressed most by this artist's great versatility. As Houghton has said, "he can laugh and weep, wax poetic and turn sternly realistic, as the theatre calls to him in different tones."

Play Production in the Classroom

by KATHARINE A. OMMANNEY

Director of Dramatics, North High School, Denver, Colorado

EVERY student of the theatre should know the fundamentals of play production; so a study of stage design, directing, rehearsing and the theories of costuming, and actual experience in make-up should enter the classwork somewhere during a year's course, but the actual making of scenery and costumes should be a part of auxiliary courses or the extra-curricular activities. I have found it satisfactory to touch upon the principles of stage production in the first semester and then study them in the second with a series of scenes from long plays or a public production by the entire class as the culmination.

There is the objection that our classes usually have more girls than boys and that they are not interested in production problems. However, I feel that they should be exposed to some experience and knowledge of backstage affairs and many of my most efficient scenic artists and assistant directors have been girls from advanced dramatics.

The history of theatre construction, scenic design and stage lighting should be presented completely enough for the students to understand how our modern theatre has grown out of the Greek and Elizabethan; how the use of artificial scenery developed in the Italian Renaissance as an art in itself unrelated to the action of the play; and how gradually more realistic effects crept in culminating in the naturalism of the late nineties. They should know something about how the magic of our electrical effects today grew out of the use of torches, candles, the lime-light and gas.

The study of scenic design supplemented by photographs of actual productions from the hands of our great artists, Adolph Appia, Gordon Craig, Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson, Donald Oenslager, Jo Mielziner and Norman Bel Geddes should form a large part of our work. Their own experience will be largely with our popular semi-realistic stage sets in which sufficiently realistic scenery is used to be of practical service in action and to create a background which is natural, effective, artistic and correct in period and locale. However, they should become familiar with the rarer forms of impressionism, symbolism and constructivism in order to appreciate how they free the imagination of the onlookers and carry them into emotional and mystic realms which belong to certain types of plays. They should understand that the theatre is a land of make-believe in which absolute naturalism becomes inappropriate because

in it the imagination must be stimulated and the artistic appreciation satisfied; therefore, the creation of the proper mood is more important than showing the actual environment and that, while the period, season and place must be clearly set forth, the emotional effect of light, line and color is of primary value.

We should make real to them the principles of all design—unity, balance, emphasis, proportion and rhythm—and show how they can best be utilized in scenic design. The use of line and mass and light and shadow is probably unfamiliar to them; they must feel that in many great dramas the human figure should be dwarfed by soaring perpendicular lines which carry the emotions upward to spiritual heights, while horizontal lines bring the emotions as well as the glance down to earth. Young people are always intrigued with color; they like to check their psychic reactions to various hues and are interested in learning that traditions of dressing old people in gray and lavender and using purple for solemn ceremonies and bright red for vulgar places and people are founded on fairly universal reactions. They can quickly see how the warm colors catch the eye and make prominent whatever object features them, while the cool colors are restful and form a good background against which the warm ones

Conclusion

In these seven articles, we have considered all the phases of the theatre which can be touched upon in a secondary dramatics course. May I reinforce what I said in the opening article. In the next few years, American education will be put to a stern test by the public and a highly specialized course like ours may well be considered a non-essential. We must prove by our results that because of its strong appeal to adolescents it is a vital force in the developing of their personalities and cultural appreciations. We must insist upon discipline, cooperation, dependability and promptness in all the class activities; we must inspire them to improve their voices, speech, manners, and social effectiveness; these are all phases of dramatic training and are qualities which are not sufficiently stressed in many high schools today. We must watch more carefully than ever our choice of plays and selections for study. Our standards of achievement cannot be too high for adolescents' love to reach for the stars and they will measure up to the ideals we require of them when they are working in a field they enjoy as much as they do ours. We have a deep responsibility to our subject, our schools, our students and ourselves if our educational dramatic field is to grow in the next ten years as it has in the last decade.—KATHARINE A. OMMANNEY.

can emphasize important things and persons. Contrast, so important in the theatre, should be discussed and examples shown to illustrate how it is used in most exciting sets in both line and color.

We must be careful, however, in bringing out new ideas that our students are not inspired to consider bizarre effects the best ones. We must convince them that simplicity should be their goal rather than complexity because the average theatergoer is not interested in elaborate detail and is confused by symbolic ideas. The less conspicuous the scenery and effects are the more effective they will be, and the audience should not be conscious of what stirs them emotionally; they should be spontaneously moved to tears, laughter and applause by the perfect combination of the play, actors and setting, not intellectually interested in analyzing any one phase.

Every student should design and make a set for a model stage. My little stage, electrically equipped, is about 14 by 19 by 36 inches and is an invaluable adjunct to the production work. The sets should be designed for some particular one-act play or scene from a longer drama and should be as original as possible, although the students will undoubtedly be influenced by the pictures we have shown them. They should be warned that proportion is their first problem; they should decide how large is the human being on their stage and then fit the design and scenery and furniture to him, with doors, windows, staircases in the same proportion. They should leave openings in the windows and fireplaces in order that colored lights can be used to give all sorts of effects. They should make their own sets, not let a skillful father or boy friend do them for them, and so we should praise artistry in effect and beauty in design, rather than mechanical perfection. The making and displaying of their small sets should be the climax of the work in stage design.

The more practical aspects of backstage activity should be talked about and reported upon: how flats and drops are made and painted; how lights are installed; how effects are created. Such topics should be supplemented by visits to real theatres where the grid, curtain, drops, cycs, flies, and light box can be inspected and explained. They should know the difference between box sets, space stages, draperies and plastic sets and the use of platforms, columns, steps and varying levels in atmospheric shows. They should also recognize the various parts of the lighting apparatus such as floods, spots, borders, gelatines, cables, dimmers, and switch board and understand how their use in bringing up the light from natural sources like lamps, windows and fireplaces is essential. They can be warned of the effect of light upon color especially green and blue upon rouge and altogether can get some vision of the part light and the electrician play in a production.

Of greater importance to them as ac-



Scene from the Christmas play, *Wonder Night*, as staged at the Seton High School (Thesopian Troupe No. 371), Cincinnati, O. Directed by Sister Marie Palmyre.

tors is the study of directing and rehearsing plays. Their experience in the first semester should prepare them for an appreciation of the infinite pains back of a really fine performance. They should realize the part the director plays; it is he who must determine the meaning of the play and plan the production to bring it out through the scenic design, interpretation of roles, timing of action, and use of lights, costumes and make-up. He must create the stage pictures, point the lines by careful action and inflections, focus the attention of the audience on a center of interest during every moment of the performance, and plan contrasting but culminating tempos rising to the climax. He must see that the play is properly cast, that rehearsals are worthwhile constructive experiences for everyone, that all the elements are unified into the whole production which does not drop in interest until the final curtain. Often he must control temperament, inspire creative power, subdue over-enthusiasm and in addition keep an eye on the box office and physical aspects of the theatre. These things are not a part of class production but our students should go from us to the little theatres of the community and university with a vision of the theatrical process as a whole, a willingness to cooperate with the director, and the ability to take direction and criticism.

In this connection, they should develop a sympathetic attitude toward the stage crew and be ready to serve on it as well as to act. They should know how to make a prompt book, how to prompt, how to place props on tables at the entrances, how to put away costumes, even how to get scenery up and down and stow it away quietly and quickly. The dramatic class should stir their interest in the theatre in which they may later get experience in all its phases.

In the same way, we can only discuss the problems of costuming in lectures and reports, but the theory of dress design will interest both the boys and girls. They will all be eager to learn how to improve their

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appearance by wearing the best lines and colors for them. The use of perpendicular lines to give them height and of horizontal lines to cut them down, the choice of fabrics and color in slimming the figure, the consideration of the silhouette in the total effect of a stage costume, are only a few of the ideas we can give them. The combination of analogous and complementary colors and the bringing out of personal beauty by emphasizing their good points and cutting down the bad ones are all fascinating to them. Reports on the history of costume, the effect of light on fabric, and the method of making a costume chart for an entire cast can be brought out in the study of costume but the actual choosing of material, making and cutting of patterns, cutting out of clothes and sewing them up must be left to other fields.

More can be done with make-up, although most of us do not have any facilities to teach it properly. After a detailed study of the techniques of make-up and the methods of painting new faces upon the blank made by the greasepaint foundation, they should all be given a chance to be made up and to make up others. All possible talk about shadows and highlights, wrinkles and eyebrows cannot take the place of actually putting them on human faces! They should be encouraged to purchase their own supplies, but a sufficient

amount of materials should be on hand and careful training in how to use them economically and neatly should be given. Only actual practice can teach them how to make-up successfully, but we can help them a great deal by lectures and demonstrations. We can train them to use very little rather than great gobs of greasepaint, we can show them how to start the rouge with a small spot from which to blend without leaving a definite edge, we can help them to minimize their defects and enhance their beauty, and we can teach them how to make wrinkles without daubing and dotting them. We can show them how to put on beards and how to use nose putty and how to show character in eyes, eyebrow and lip lines, but it is only through doing all these things many times over and over again that they can become of any use to themselves or us backstage. However, we should develop a small group of efficient people to help in our public productions.

This brief discussion may give the impression of superficiality in our approach to play production, but in many high schools there is ample opportunity afforded by other classes and extra-curricular activities to supplement it. I think the business of the dramatics teacher is to inspire a deep enthusiasm for the theatre; we can give them bibliographies of helpful books in all the fields and from us they can gain a knowledge of the intense labor and painstaking service involved in play production. We can make them conscious of their obligation to the audience in a public performance—the curtain's going up on time, smooth dialogue with rapidly picked up cues and well-pointed lines; attractive stage pictures with artistic combinations of line and color in set and costumes; and a group of actors—poised, skillful, and attractive—working together to make the play a living experience. This knowledge will not only make them better actors, backstage workers, and theatergoers, but it will make dramatic enthusiasts of the finest type who will ultimately improve our American stage.

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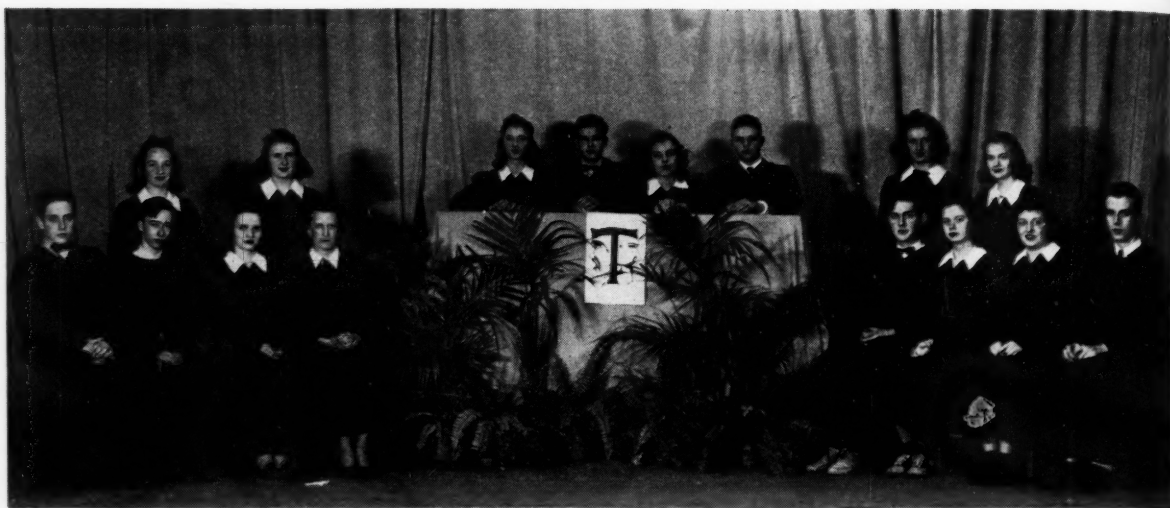
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Thespian Troupe No. 494 was formally established at the Bay Village, O., High School during an impressive ceremony held early in January. Mrs. Marjorie G. Mink is founder and sponsor of the troupe.



The New Theatre in China

by GEORGE TAYLOR

Executive Officer, Department of Oriental Studies, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington

THE development of a new theatre in China is more than a by-product of the present conflict between China and Japan. It is an essential expression of the rebirth of Chinese nationalism, as well as an important technique of propaganda employed among the peasantry by the government and the army. The new theatre is contributing to the intellectual preparation for the New China which will emerge from the war.

The theatre has always been important in China, but before this war began, the universities had taken very little formal interest in it. The old style Chinese theatre was staffed exclusively by men who had received a very long apprenticeship—sometimes a very painful one—which began at a very early age. Every actor had to be an acrobat as well as a singer, and those who could keep a very high falsetto voice (an accomplishment very much prized by the theatre-going public) rose quickly to the top of the profession. The actor, however, had no social status. He came from a low social class, and, however great his skill, however distinguished his audience, he was classified with barbers, menials and other low-grade members of the community. When Mei Lan-fang, who enjoys an international reputation and is particularly well-known in the United States, was invited by American missionaries to attend the opening of an American university in Peking, the Chinese members of the faculty refused to be present.

The plays, if such they can be called, that the old theatre was concerned with observed none of the unities. They were long, rambling historical narratives, interspersed with action and pointed with song. Long passages in them were unimportant and often dull. In fact, the Chinese au-

dience only ceases drinking tea, spitting melon seeds, talking, chatting, and belching when the very finest actors arrive on the stage, which is usually towards midnight, after the show has been going on for three or four hours. These plays dealt with nothing more nor less than the history of China.

The historical nature of the plays is important, for the theatre was the only amusement of the peasant and the main means through which the illiterate absorbed anything of the national tradition and culture. The itinerant players who appeared at country villages—and China is a land of villages—at the major festivals would put on their show out in the open in freezing weather to a standing audience of bare-headed peasants. The peasant of China, therefore, was brought up with the theatre and depended on it for the major diversions in his monotonous existence.

On these foundations the modern theatre has grown. In the decade before the opening of the present conflict in 1937, there had been several efforts to break away from the traditional Chinese theatre, but no medium was established. The reaction of western-educated Chinese against the old theatre went too far, and, instead of trying to establish something that would take into account the techniques of the Western theatre and at the same time remain purely Chinese, the innovators sought to transplant the Western theatre in its entirety to China. The result was something artificial, gigantic, uninspiring and unpopular. Plays written by high government officials had to be acted, but were rarely popular enough to be attended. The war has changed all this. The feeble experimentation of those who imitated the West

has been swept away, together with the old war-lords and, indeed, with much of the prejudices and traditions of the old order. The new theatre has developed where the conflict between the Chinese and Japanese is deepest; that is, in those areas—particularly in the northern provinces and the northwest—where the Japanese army occupies the main cities and railways but does not occupy the hinterland which lies between them. In this vast hinterland, there grew up, after the initial successes of the Japanese, a guerilla movement under the direction of the Red Army (now called the Eighth Route Army) which depended for its success—as does all guerilla warfare—upon the cooperation of the people. The new theatre is one of the chief weapons used by the new leaders in spreading anti-Japanese sentiment, in arousing peasant nationalism, and in constructing, in other words, a popular basis for resistance to the invader. A new situation had arisen which demanded new ideas.

These ideas could not come from the old theatre, nor was there anything of value in the officially sponsored experiments in western drama. The new ideas came from the only group which knew enough of China to be nationalistic on the one hand and to see the shortcomings of the old order on the other. Such a group could come only from the Chinese universities. The Chinese student has always played a great part in Chinese politics since the establishment of the Republic in 1911. But the part he is playing now under very uncomfortable conditions—on poor food, few comforts, and in constant danger of his life, is the most significant and most useful ever to have fallen to his lot. From among the students have come playwrights who can write new plays telling the peasant about the war, about his part in it, and, most important of all, about the way in which—with his cooperation—the Japanese can be successfully resisted. These plays are obviously didactic, but Chinese propaganda has the saving grace of

humor. It could not otherwise compel attention, for no audience is so critical as the illiterate Chinese peasant who does not watch his plays from red plush seats, but sits on the hard threshing floor of the village. It must be a good play which can keep an audience of three or four hundred men and women standing or sitting for hours in rain, as I have seen them do, and all within a few miles of the Japanese garrisons.

The new theatre is new in content as well as in techniques. It has a message which grows out of a situation so pressing that it dominates all other interests. It is part of a battle for life or death. Those who are engaged in it are not setting out to amuse tired businessmen or titillate a jaded public. They are under the necessity of arousing a peasantry to a sense of danger and a willingness to cooperate. This is no small task in a country where the main function of government has been the collection of taxes; where peasants have fled from their villages at the sight of their own troops; and where the gap between the educated and the uneducated has been so deep as to be almost unbridgeable. These plays are written in haste and composed in danger. No other plays could be written under present circumstances.

The new theatre combines the casualness of the old, without its rigid conventions, with some of the unities of the western stage. The falsetto singing has gone; women are admitted as actors; the language is that of everyday speech; the situations are local. But there is no scenery, no stage lighting, no artifice. Just as in the old theatre, the stage-hand will walk across the back of the stage with complete unconcern, and important guests will sit at the sides of the platform as in Shakespearean days. But, most important of all, contact between actors and audience is not only consistent but expected. On an occasion when some great emotional crisis has been reached in the play, I have seen a political leader step forward on the platform and give the audience the cue for shouting "Down with the Japanese imperialists!" The audience has responded lustily, and the play has gone on. These illiterate peasants join with the forces of good, as they are portrayed on the stage, to overcome the forces of evil.

There is no question but that this rough-and-ready, but very vital, new theatre has been successful—both in terms of the success it has had in securing the allegiance of the peasantry to the cause of national resistance, and in terms of the successful manner in which it has combined what was essential and permanent in the old theatre with the unities of the western theatre. These plays are written down and are fairly faithfully followed, but no one objects if the actor embellish upon his theme spontaneously. The whole movement is so vital and such a necessary part of national resistance that it can overcome almost any obstacle. I have seen Americans who did not know a word of Chinese

Decalogue for Dramatics Directors in Wartime

1. *THOU shalt maintain full confidence and integrity in thy chosen profession during the crucial months which lie ahead.*
2. *THOU shalt not be caught unprepared by thy critics who shalt come out of the Forest of Ignorance crying "fad" and "frill" at thee and thy dramatics program. Thou shalt use the visible evidence of the results of thy efforts to prove that only the misinformed and the uninformed maketh such false accusations.*
3. *THOU shalt carefully integrate all thy dramatics activities with the defense activities of thy school and thy community, for the benefits of active cooperation are well known to thee.*
4. *THOU shalt not run to thy principal FOR IDEAS; thou shalt go to him WITH IDEAS which will give dramatics a more prominent role in the defense program of thy school. Thou shalt be alert, resourceful, original. Thou shalt think deeply so that thou shalt be certain thine ideas are practical and workable. Remember thy principal is human, all other opinions notwithstanding, and he hath little time to waste.*
5. *THOU shalt choose plays which elevate standards in thy school and community, plays which teach better citizenship and Americanism, and better understanding of the Democratic Way of Life. Thou shalt continue to teach Tolerance, and Justice, and the Might of Right. Thou shalt remember to teach the greatness of Peace and Brotherhood, for thy students will inherit the World of Tomorrow.*
6. *THOU shalt encourage the production of original plays among thy students, for the classroom, for the school assembly, for the community, and for the radio. Thou shalt remember to dramatize materials which bear on the defense effort in thine own locality, for thou and thy students know best thine own locality and its needs.*
7. *THOU shalt make a special effort to prepare programs which thou may well present to the clubs and organizations of thy community. Thou shalt do all within thy power to arrange for the exchange of patriotic programs among the schools of thy district.*
8. *Thou shalt do all within thy power to give all thy students an opportunity to participate in thy dramatics program. Thou shalt always remember that thy students are eager to work with thee and serve thee. Thou shalt not dampen their enthusiasm, for then thou commit irreparable damage.*
9. *THOU shalt keep thy department and all its activities well-planned, well-organized, and well-managed. Thou shalt not run thy department into debt, for then thou give visible evidence that thou does not manage well and thy principal and thy superintendent will like thee not.*
10. *THOU shalt be compromising in thy ways when the good of many is at stake. Thou shalt willingly make sacrifices for the good of thy school. Thou shalt fight for thy rights, but thou shalt not be unreasonable. If thy principal seemeth dictatorial, thou shalt remember in thine anger that he seeth the school as a whole, something which thou cannot do from within the four walls of thy classroom. Thou shalt be worthy of the exalted title given thee, "Director of Dramatics."—Editor.*

watching these plays in the heart of the guerilla country and remaining spell-bound from beginning to end. Indeed, it is misleading to imply that these plays can be *watched*, for the audience is so much a part of the theatre that a distinction between the actor and the audience becomes almost artificial. One does not *watch*; one *takes part* in the play.

Through the new theatre, the gap between the educated and the uneducated has been bridged. Students who a few years ago were living in the luxury of university life, completely divorced from all interest in or knowledge of their fellow men, are now writing plays and leading groups of actors from village to village. There is no fame or glory in this occupation, for this type of theatre does not encourage hero-worship of playwrights or

actors. There is merely the satisfaction of assuming responsibility in an ever-deepening national movement and in identifying the fate of the educated minority with that of the uneducated majority of China's people. A theatre such as this would be crude and unintelligible if transplanted to American universities, but there is something for us to envy perhaps in the present opportunities of Chinese students to take their drama to the people and to write and act in plays which are of vital concern to their audience. Peasants of China would never have been permitted on a university campus before the war began, but now the university has gone to the peasant and has discovered anew that the old and universal medium, the drama, can renew its vitality only in the lives of the common people.

"Eeny, Meeny, Miney, Mo!"

by WINNIE MAE CRAWFORD

Director of Children's Theatre, Texas State College for Women, Denton, Texas

ONE hundred and fifty eager children and only ten parts to cast make a harried director of a Children's Theatre feel like resorting to the method of selection used in childhood—"Eeny, meeny, miney, mo, catch a nigger by the toe!" Instead, a thoughtful director feels compelled to accomplish the following while casting:

1. To select the best possible cast from available children.
2. To evaluate the abilities of the children who come to the try-outs, with future productions as well as the immediate one in mind.
3. To make a record of the conclusions for reference.
4. To give each child an adequate opportunity to show his abilities.
5. To make every child feel that he has had a fair chance and to encourage desirable attitudes on the part of the ones selected and those not included in the cast.

The short interest span of children adds to the difficulty of the tasks. The inexperienced director may find some of the following suggestions helpful in accomplishing the objectives outlined when a large number of children appear for try-outs.

(I) Hours of careful preparation will prevent discouraging confusion at the try-outs. First, devise some quick way of getting and recording vital statistics concerning the interested children. If possible, get several older children or preferably adults to assist in order to save time. The name, age, address, name and occupation of parent, telephone number, school, grade, height, weight, color and length of hair, general coloring, and previous experience in plays are items frequently found helpful to know. If convenient, arrange tables at the entrance to enable your assistants to get this information as the children enter.

The cards or mimeographed sheets with information filled in should be passed to the director to check the following items as the try-outs progress: voice quality, diction, bodily response, ability to read lines, flexibility, ability to project, response to criticism and suggestions, and whatever additional comments he wishes to have recorded.

The date should also be placed on the card because information concerning height, weight, and voice quality may be of little use after a year has passed if the children are growing rapidly.

The back of the card should have a place to record parts played in the Children's Theatre plays and a place for comments on attitude of the child in rehearsals and performances. This information is very valuable in casting future plays. Every particular item on the card may not be checked, but much if not all of this data will be found useful.

(II) The second phase of preparation

concerns material for the actual try-outs. If you plan to have the children read scenes from the play, carefully select and mark episodes to be used. Choose episodes: (1) not involving many characters, (2) dependent on a minimum of stage business, (3) demanding response to emotional crises most important in the play. In other words, select short climactic episodes which can be read without going through involved stage business.

Before the children arrive for this type of try-out, the director should: (1) prepare to tell the plot of the play or some play with similar situations (2) select or invent pantomimes for impromptu performances by the children (3) prepare a brief and interesting description of important characters and (4) if possible, prepare costume plates to show the children.

Visualize a hundred children drawn to try-outs for various reasons. Some are noisy, desiring to show off; some are shy, sensitive, emotionally responsive, but scared; some are jaded from having had too many chances to appear in public; some are sent by mothers whose dramatic instinct has somehow not had a sufficient outlet; others have come without knowing

EXIT

WITH this issue THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN makes its exit for the 1941-42 season. Barring unforeseen events and circumstances, and the unforeseeable is very much with us all these critical days, our publication will appear again in the fall with the first issue (October) of the 1942-43 season.

The year now ending has been, for us, an exciting one. First, we were conscious all along that we were enjoying the opportunity of continuing our efforts in behalf of the Arts of Peace, against a background of world-shaking events. Few places remain on this troubled world where men may enjoy such blessings. Equally exciting was the happy thought that our circle of friends continued to grow as each issue came off the press. Generous with their compliments and constructive in their criticisms were our subscribers. The thought that, in promoting the high school theatre, we too were doing our part in providing that entertainment so essential to a nation at war, pleased us and spurred us onward. In spite of the war, or because of it, the high school theatre is a livelier organization today than it was a year ago. Its success is our success, for we are a part of that theatre.

The immediate future is obscured by many uncertainties. Uncle Sam has a heavy task to perform and nothing must stand in his way. Should he suggest that we use less paper and metal, we will gladly comply. It will be a small sacrifice compared with that being made by our soldiers at war. Meanwhile, we shall proceed with our plans, already in their advanced stage, of giving our readers a variety of timely and practical articles they rightfully expect from us next season. To our subscribers, our loyal advertisers, and our contributors, we say "Many thanks."—EDITOR.

that the try-outs are to be held because the leader of the gang led the way. One of the most effective ways of getting a feeling of group unity is to tell the children enough of the plot to stimulate their imaginations. The plot may be of the play or of a story with similar character types.

Immediately following the telling of the story, conduct a short discussion of the main characters. Select one for detailed discussion. After the children have decided what this character looks like, how he would act and walk because of his particular race, age, social position, training, and emotional state, et cetera, let the entire group sit as they think the character would. All during the try-out let the entire group participate as much as possible. This will help the shy and sensitive child to forget himself and become accustomed to the situation. It will also keep the group from getting restless. Careful watching will permit the director to observe those who stand out from the group in creating characterizations through actions. Next call for volunteers from the group or select several who were noticeably superior to come before the group to walk as they think the character would walk.

Endeavor to get each child to give his own interpretation of the character and to add bits of business. This will gradually help develop the action of some episodes. Check cards of the children who are outstanding. Also watch the empathic responses of those not on the floor. The ones with expressive bodies will be reacting while the others are performing.

After the children have the idea well established of what the actions of the first character selected would be, choose another who appears in some episode with the first character and let the entire group discuss and repeat the procedure suggested for the first. Let the entire group, or several from one row do something as the character would. Then let individuals act alone. Later have the two characters appear together and go through the action.

If time is too limited for detailed discussion, this type of try-out can be speeded by repeating a well-known Mother Goose Rhyme and letting the children give impromptu dramatizations, e.g., Little Miss Muffet, Little Jack Horner, Old King Cole, or There Was An Old Woman. Try to choose one which has emotional reactions, as well as activity.

After the group has an enthusiastic start, or if you have children who are familiar with the procedure in creative dramatics, you can vary the try-out by giving them a plot as the directors of *Commedia dell'Arte* did. Tell the plot to the children and then permit them to create the action and dialogue impromptu. Always be sure, however, that the children understand and have enough background to do this before you try it.

The use of interesting costume plates can also be used as a basis for original

Scene from the Children's Theatre production of *The Scotch Twins* at the Texas State College for Women. The actors are Freshmen college students. Directed by Miss Winnie Mae Crawford.



characterizations and pantomimes. If the plates are available, the director can use them following the telling of a portion of the plot and a discussion of the characters. The discussion may even be omitted. The children enjoy this type of activity and often their response is quite indicative of their acting ability.

These pantomimes are safeguards to help eliminate the children who fool a director by reading fairly well at sight but who show little ability to create convincing characterizations. The original characterizations and pantomimes will also test the children's imagination and flexibility. As the children read and give their pantomimes, the director can also make suggestions to see how a child responds to criticism and how flexible he is in improving. If he is reading from the manuscript, test his reaction to suggestions concerning changes in diction, pitch, quality and volume of voice, or pronunciation. If giving a pantomime, make suggestions concerning tempo or emotional reaction. Think twice before casting a child who cannot readily respond to suggestions especially if time is limited. Some children who are very slow will give acceptable performances, however, if the director has a lengthy period for rehearsals.

At the first big try-outs it is usually wise to have a very short pantomime and very short bits to read so that every child can participate. Instruct the children that the ones who are to return will be notified by telephone, at school, by bulletin boards in schools, or by whatever way will save the most time. Sometimes it is advisable to let the children leave as the director decides it impossible to use them for the cast. Then the detailed try-outs can be given to the remaining few; however, tell all the children when the play is to be presented and tell them of future plays in which they may be able to appear even though not cast for the first play of the season. This announcement will serve to create interest in the play and will aid the publicity department.

The children called for the second try-out should be those being considered for that particular play. If a director wishes to be sure that epidemics of measles will not postpone the play, a double cast is a good safeguard. The competition afforded by a double cast is also an added incentive

which helps to secure the best efforts on the part of each member of the cast. If the play is to be given twice, a double cast produces a marvelous feeling of security. Each cast should then be permitted to give the play.

At the second try-out the ensemble should be worked out: adjustments of comparative sizes, foils, contrasts in voices, et cetera. Before the group leaves, it is advisable to explain all the requirements for the production in detail.

The Children's Theatre of the Texas State College for Women in addition to stressing the fact that if parts are retained it is necessary to be at every rehearsal, explains the following:

1. Dates of rehearsals.
2. Length of rehearsals.
3. Dates of performances.

To avoid complications in family plans, the parents of those in the cast are called. The director explains the same things which have been told to the children and tells the parents that the Children's

Theatre will furnish the costumes and scripts, and asks the parent's cooperation with rehearsals. This may not be necessary in many cases, but sometimes parents have planned to have the children out of town on dress rehearsal and performance dates. It is better to recast at the beginning than two days before the play!

Also check the performance date with the public schools and teachers for overlapping assignments. To an inexperienced director this may seem to have little relationship to try-outs, but it will often save hours of time to check with parents and schools before the final try-outs because one change in a cast will frequently necessitate several.

Every director, of course, has his own favorite ways of casting and frequently different methods are used by the Children's Theatre of the Texas State College for Women, but using this creative dramatics approach combined with the traditional has proved more successful here than the usual try-out method.



Scene from the production of *Tom Sawyer* at the Champaign, Illinois, High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 106.) Miss Marion Stuart, director.

The Playwrights of Rome

by FRED C. BLANCHARD

Director of Dramatics, Woodrow Wilson Junior College, Chicago, Ill.

HERE is a typical Roman comedy plot. A young man of wealth and position is in love with a girl of lower social standing. The hero's grouchy father opposes the match. The love-sick young man is aided by his clever servant, and the father is tricked into giving his consent. The mother or mistress of the girl is won over by flattery or presents. The lovers are finally brought together, and the girl often turns out to be of good birth. Now, think of the comedies you have played in or the movies you have seen. How many of them have been based on this fundamental theme? In Roman drama, this romantic comedy story, with variations, is told over and over again.

These features, of course, are to be found especially in comedy. In tragedy, we have become less subject to Roman influence. We must go back to the Renaissance, to the works of the French classical writers, to the melodramas of the 18th and 19th centuries, for parallels with the serious plays of Rome. Here we find the long rhetorical speeches, the melodramatic themes, the regular act divisions, and the obvious heroics which we now consider ranting and bombast.

Comedy, as we discovered in our last article, constituted the finest product of the Roman dramatic genius. There were many writers of comedy; the greatest of these, whose works we know and read and even produce today, were Plautus and Terence. We can hardly claim to any knowledge of the Roman theatre without reading a few plays of each. Not so long ago, all high school students studied Latin literature, so that there are many editions of these plays, both in Latin and in English translations. And just by way of a gentle hint, Plautus and Terence are easy and pleasant reading.

As in the case of most ancient writers, we know little of the actual life of Titus Maccius Plautus. Even the date of his birth is uncertain, but it was about 254 B. C. He was born in Sarsina, a town in Umbria, and was thus the first Roman playwright from the northern part of Italy. His parents were probably free citizens, but poor, and seem to have brought him to Rome when he was a child. Of his education, we know nothing. As a young man, he worked in the theatre, perhaps as a stage hand, perhaps as an actor, perhaps as an assistant producer. It seems quite certain, though, that he did have the opportunity to learn theatre practice at first hand. He then engaged in some sort of commercial enterprise away from the city. When his business failed, he returned to Rome penniless, and hired himself out to physical

labor as apprentice to a miller. According to report, it was while he was engaged in this work that he wrote his first three plays during his spare time. His first play appeared about 224 B. C. Thus, at the age of thirty, he found his life work. From that time on, he was a successful playwright and producer. Just how many plays he wrote is not certain, but some writers have estimated that he was the author of as many as one hundred and thirty stage pieces. Of these, twenty are extant, most of them complete. His plays were crowd-pleasers, and he was highly popular in his own time. He died in 184 B. C., at the age of seventy. According to the story, he wrote his own epitaph. It has been translated as follows: "*After Plautus died, comedy mourns, the stage is deserted; then laughter, mirth and jest all went in company.*"

His characters were the familiar ones—the irascible father, the love-sick swain, the braggart, the cheat, the parasite, the clever slave. The plot already outlined would serve for most of Plautus' works. But there are some departures from the usual story of love affair or amusing fraud. *The Ship Rope* is the romantic story of the rescue of two shipwrecked girls, who are threatened by a villain. *The Three Penny Bit* is a story of friendship, the theme of *The Braggart Soldier* is revealed in its title, *The Money Jar* is a study of a miser, *The Brothers Menaechmi* uses mistaken identity as its principal source of humor.

By way of illustration, let us examine one play in some detail. *Amphitryon* is one of the most interesting and unusual of Latin comedies. It has been the basis of many later plays. The contemporary Jean Giradoux called his adaptation *Amphitryon 38*, in allusion to the many times it has been used. Plautus' play opens with a long and amusing prologue spoken by the god Mercury. He tells the audience about the entire situation, thus heightening the comic effect of the confusing events which follow. The audience is informed that Amphitryon is about to return from the wars, but that the god Jupiter, enamored of Alcmena, Amphitryon's wife, has taken the form of Amphitryon. Alcmena, believing Jupiter to be her husband, has welcomed him to his home. As a further complication, Mercury has taken the form of Amphitryon's servant Sosia. Sosia returns to inform his mistress of the impending arrival of her husband, but is chased away by Mercury, who almost persuades the servant out of his own identity. Jupiter takes his leave of Alcmena, first giving her the golden bowl which had been presented to Amphitryon for bravery in

battle. Such things, of course, are easy for a god. Sosia returns with Amphitryon; the master believes the servant drunk or mad because of his story of another Sosia. Alcmena is surprised to see her husband, believing that he had left only a few minutes before. She soon reveals her belief that she had welcomed Amphitryon the night before. As evidence, she shows the golden bowl with which she had been presented. Amphitryon is incensed because he thinks his wife has been unfaithful. He leaves to get a relative from the ship to witness the fact that he was newly arrived. Alcmena agrees to accept the testimony of the witness, and, if she is proven false, to submit to a divorce. On his return, Amphitryon is insulted by Mercury (in the guise of Sosia), and quarrels violently with his wife and Jupiter. Always, of course, Amphitryon and Sosia get the worst of these encounters. Distracted by all that has happened, Amphitryon determines to kill all those who had deceived him. He is about to rush into the house, when he is struck down by a thunderbolt. Jupiter's voice is heard from the heavens. He tells Amphitryon what has happened, and the husband, who cannot blame his wife for what was done by the gods, goes to offer her his forgiveness. In such a brief outline, none of the humorous details of lines and business can be given, but the comic possibilities of the story are evident.

In contrast to the virile plays of Plautus stand the six more refined comedies of Terence. Publius Terentius Afer was born in Carthage in northern Africa about 190 B. C. He was brought to Rome as the slave of Terentius Lucanus, whose name he assumed. The "Afer" of his name refers to his African origin. Terentius Lucanus, a Roman senator, evidently recognized his slave's talents, for Terence was given an excellent education and soon freed. He is said to have been gifted with unusual grace and charm as well as literary talents. He became the intimate of many of the most cultured and best educated men of Rome, among them Scipio, Laelius and Furius Philus. These men were the center of the sophisticated "literary circle" of the time, and it was this circle which Terence attempted to please in his writing. He read his first play, *The Lady of Andros*, to Caecilius, official critic and foremost comic poet of the day, who expressed approval of the work. Terence's first comedy was produced in 166 B. C., his last in 160. Grecian art and literature were much admired by Terence and his noble friends, and his plays were written with the avowed intention of recapturing the Grecian spirit. Several of his associates probably assisted him in his playwriting. In 160 B. C., he journeyed to Greece, probably to learn of its life and culture at first hand. From this journey he never returned. He died the next year, at the age of only twenty-six. According to one story, he was lost at sea. Another version is that he died of a broken heart,

after his baggage and some new translations of Menander's plays had been lost by shipwreck. He wrote only six plays, but they have fortunately all been preserved.

Terence was a frank imitator of Greek comedy. He translated and adapted the plays of Menander and others, faithfully and carefully. He regarded the work of bringing Greek culture to Rome as his legitimate function. He used the same plots of intrigue and love as Plautus, with more refinement but less originality and spirit. He did seem to be interested in the characters in his plays, and his use of "psychological" appeal has often been commended. His plots seem unduly complicated, and he is likely to use the element of surprise rather than the dramatic irony of Plautus. He used the same stock characters as Plautus, but they are always more polished, less robust. Plautus was vulgar, Terence aristocratic. In his writing, he was orderly, precise, exact. He liked the neatly turned phrasing of the commonplace. Some of his expressions have become proverbial—"while there's life there's hope," "many men, many minds," and "fortune favors the brave." Terence was always moderate, urbane, cultured.

The first of his plays, *The Lady of Andros*, is the story of the love affair of a wealthy young man and a supposedly inferior young lady. Of course, the lady in question proves to be a very acceptable person and all ends happily. The tricks of a slave are largely responsible for the happy outcome. *The Mother-In-Law* is the story of a young married couple. They quarrel, the wife returns to her mother, the pair are at last reconciled. *The Eunuch* has an involved plot with two love affairs. *The Clever Parasite* has another pair of romances, this time resolved through the devices of Phormio, the parasite. *The Brothers* contrasts two systems for bringing up youth.

The Self Tormenter is typical of Terence's work. It opens with an interesting prologue, in which the author announces, through one of the actors, that the audience is about to see a new play from a Greek source. The playwright justifies his practice of writing Greek plays, and defends himself against the charge that his plays are written by his friends, not himself. The speaker of the prologue then introduces the play of "quiet action." We find that two old men live in adjoining houses in Attica. One of them has sent his son away because of a love affair of which he did not approve, and torments himself because of his harsh action. The second old man has a son who is in love with an extravagant mistress, without the knowledge of his parents. The exiled son, Clinia, returns and takes refuge in the neighbor's home. A slave undertakes several complicated deceptions to conclude these love affairs satisfactorily. At last, Clinia's be-



Cast and stage set for *Eyes of Tlaloc* as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 230 at the Fort Hill High School of Cumberland, Md. Directed by Gerardine Pritchard.

loved is discovered to be the long-lost daughter of the neighbor, and permission for their marriage is gained. Clitipho, the neighbor's son, is persuaded to give up his mistress, but is allowed to choose among other desirable girls for his bride. There are several well-drawn characters—the fathers, the sons, and the slave. The turns in plot, especially in connection with the slave's tricks, are numerous.

The one Roman writer of tragedy of any importance to us is Seneca the Younger (3 B.C.-65 A.D.). He was famous as a philosopher and statesman, and the events of his life are well-known to us. Born in Corduba in Spain, the son of another Seneca known as a great rhetorician, he was brought to Rome when young, and studied under several philosophers. There he held many high political offices, including the consulship. He incurred the enmity of the Emperor Caligula, and later, in 41 A.D., he was banished to Corsica by the Emperor Claudius. Agrippina, the mother of Nero, brought about his return to Rome. He was Nero's tutor, and later the advisor of the young Emperor. Exceedingly wealthy, he was said to have amassed a fortune of fifteen million dollars and owned property all over the empire. He lost his influence over Nero, and attempted to escape notice by retiring from public life and giving away some of his wealth. But in 65 A.D., he was accused of being involved in a conspiracy, and was sentenced to death by suicide.

He wrote works of many kinds—dialogues, orations, philosophical essays, scientific treatises, and tragedies. His plays were probably among his early works. It is probably that they were intended as a sort of literary exercise, and that they were read or performed in part at private gatherings. It is the general belief that they were not presented publicly, although some scholars attack this view. Certainly, Seneca's training and inclination were not those of a professional playwright. The subjects of his tragedies came from Greek tradition and mythology, and had all been used by the Greek dramatists we have studied. He

did not actually translate Greek plays, but imitated them very closely. In general, it can be said that his plays are but pale reflections of their Greek models, with none of the brilliance and fervor which marked Attic drama. The characters are self-consciously heroic and noble, the speeches long and declamatory. In themselves, Seneca's plays have no outstanding merit. They are interesting to us today chiefly because of their effect on the drama of later periods.

Titles of some of his nine extant plays will reveal their subject matter—*Oedipus*, *Medea*, *Hercules Furens*, *The Daughters of Troy*, *Agamemnon*. Of these, the *Medea* is perhaps the most favorably regarded. It deals with the same portion of the myth as the *Medea* of Euripides.

In Roman drama, there was one playwright of undoubted genius—Plautus. But the influence of Roman plays on later periods was out of all proportion to their intrinsic worth. This influence, unhappily, was not always for the best. In tragedy, Seneca's plays were long regarded as models. French and Italian critics almost made the literary world believe that Seneca represented ancient tragedy at its finest. French classical writers, like Corneille and Racine, adhered to the Senecan form and rhetoric. Classical pre-Shakespearean tragedy, as performed at the universities, the inns of court and the Court, were based on the study of Seneca, and constituted one of the elements which were fused into the great drama of the Elizabethans. Plautus and Terence affected the work of Shakespeare and Moliere, and consequently all modern comedy. Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*, adapted from Plautus' *The Brothers Menæchmi*, is the most familiar example.

Sentiment, intrigue, unhappy melodrama, stock comic characters, the old five-act form, strict adherence to set rules, all of these we owe to the Roman playwrights. In every old melodrama, in every romantic comedy, in every intricate farce, we catch some glimpse of the theatre of that ancient city by the Tiber, of the grandeur that was Rome.

Staging the High School Play

This department is designed to assist teachers in choosing, casting, and producing plays at the high school level. Suggestions as to plays which should be discussed next or how this department can be of greater assistance to teachers will be welcomed.

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Thespian Senior Councilor and Director of Dramatics at Berea College, Berea, Ky.

MOOR BORN

(As produced and directed by Earl W. Blank, at Berea College)

by JUANITA MORRIS

Senior student and secretary of the Berea Players

Moor Born. A drama in five scenes, by Dan Tothoroh. 1840 Costumes; 3 men; 5 women. One interior. Royalty, \$25.00. Samuel French, 25 W. 45th Street, New York.

SUITABILITY. There is no phase of *Moor Born* too difficult to be worked out by a high school cast and crew willing to put forth their best efforts. It might be staged against drapes, with a minimum of lighting and sound equipment, and costumes. For the more experienced groups, the play lends itself well to "mahogany" flats, trick lighting, detailed make-up and costuming, carefully planned furniture, scenery, and more intricate sound effects.

A true characterization of any of the roles will challenge the ability of most amateur actors; however, this very challenge will usually keep one on his toes to do an excellent job.

Plot. Within the four gloomy walls of the parsonage at Haworth, the Reverend Patrick Brontë reared his family of geniuses in a world bare of luxury. Just before the death of Mrs. Brontë and when the eldest of her six children was close to seven years old, the seeds of tuberculosis settled in the frail bodies of the neglected little ones. Two of the children, Marie and Elizabeth, yielded to the disease when very young, leaving Charlotte, now only ten, as the responsible mother.

The play, *Moor Born*, pictures the later life of the five remaining Brontës, bound close together by love and loyalty, accepting almost fatalistically their tragic existence.

Casting. In casting the Brontë sisters, care should be taken to show contrast in size, color of hair, voice quality, etc. Emily was played by a girl 5' 7 1/2" tall, with very dark hair and eyes. Charlotte was blond, approximately 5' 5" in height. A blond was also cast as Anne, but her hair was darkened to brown. Anne was 5' 4" tall and much more slender than either Charlotte or Emily. Different hair styles helped to give further contrast.

Branwell, the diseased dope addict, must be able to show intense physical and mental agony. The part was played by a boy with sharp features, dark eyes and black hair which was allowed to grow much longer than he usually wore it.

The Reverend Patrick Brontë is the

aged father, stooped, and almost blind. The boy cast in this role had features that would lend themselves well to character make-up, and a very deep voice.

Christopher, the farmer, can be played by any male who does not look too adolescent. Martha should have a good comedy sense, as she is the only one of the cast who takes life easily. Healthy and red-faced, she should contrast the gray, stooped figure of Tabby, who "has been in this house for nigh onto twenty-eight years."

Direction. Cold, bleak moor winds, the tombstones in the distance, the dark, gloomy walls of the "prison house" in which the family lives set the atmosphere from the beginning.

Since the play is moody from curtain to curtain, except for an occasional spat between Martha and Tabby, special care needs to be taken with timing to prevent dragging or monotony. Several of the important and difficult scenes may require extra attention:

1. Branwell and Emily's death scenes. At no time should the actors wax melodramatic; certainly not in these scenes. The lines are so written that they almost carry themselves; have the actors read them simply.
2. Charlotte's discovery of Emily's poetry. Avoid the oratorical in this scene; keep business natural and simple.
3. The Reverend Mr. Brontë's "preaching" scenes. Throughout the play and here, especially, economy of direction is important.

Juanita Morris

MISS MORRIS is a senior in Berea College and is very active in dramatics. At present she is the secretary of the Berea Players and she was formerly the secretary of the local chapter of Tau Delta Tau, national stagecraft fraternity. She is pledged to Alpha Psi Omega, national honorary dramatic fraternity. For the past two years Miss Morris has been the wardrobe mistress for the Berea Players and in this capacity ably costumed *Death Takes a Holiday*, *Three-Cornered Moon* and *Moor Born*.

It is interesting to note that Miss Morris is an Economics Major. I like to think that students whose foremost interest lies in another field of study realizes the practical value of active participation in extra-curricular dramatics. Miss Morris has proved a fine example of this.

Moor Born is another play like *Pride and Prejudice* which makes possible the integration of material studied in literature classes with actual dramatic production. Seeing this play sincerely staged should stimulate students to greater interest in the works of the Brontë Sisters.

Stage speech was used by all the players except Tabby, Martha, and Christopher, who used the Yorkshire dialect. People on the campus who knew this dialect advised us, and a recording of the dialect helped to give the voice pattern and inflection.

Stage Problems. The planning of the set presented more than the ordinary problems of stage design. The colors finally chosen were symbolic of the somber atmosphere of the play and, at the same time, symbolic of the moodiness of the Brontë family. A cold, gray-brown was the background, streaked with red to look like the graining of wood. A mixture of oxide of iron and blue produced the desired shade of rose-red for these streaks. Although a quite convincing looking mahogany "woodwork" was achieved with the use of a wood grainer, borrowed from the College painting department, from the auditorium the effect was confusing, and a bathroom brush was substituted for the wood-grainer, the warm color or graining applied in irregular vertical streaks. Seen under the surprise pink lights they had a purplish cast.

Because the budget would not allow the actual wood panelling that was so popular in 19th century England, it was decided to try to achieve the effect of depth by painted panels, a job made more difficult by the variations in lighting throughout the three acts. Finally, as a safe compromise, we used corrugated paper panels, tacked to the wall with the smooth side out, to give a little actual thickness. The illusion of more depth was created by painting the "panels" a little lighter than the background. Such panels need not necessarily conform to the size of the flats. For *Moor Born* they were planned in architectural units, as determined by the placing of the doors, windows and fireplace.

To avoid overcrowding as a result of furniture jutting out into the room, the fireplace was recessed and the mantle supported by columns covered with corrugated paper and painted to match the walls. The grand piano, too, was set partly in a recessed alcove.

A horsehair sofa was covered with a heavy material of black with a tiny red figure. Here, too, the effect of distance was in its favor, and it looked completely in harmony with its mahogany background. Blue cotton flannel drapes were used at the window, and the window was also recessed slightly, with a built-in seat in front of it, placed at such an angle that it was within the acting area. The less expensive rubber pliafilm covered the window and volunteer artists in the play production class painted an outdoor scene showing the church where the Reverend Patrick Brontë preached, with the cemetery surrounded by the English moors. Another backdrop showing the distant moors was painted for use back of the door.

Setting for all five parts of *Moor Born* as designed by Rosella Morgan and assisted by Linley Stafford, the latter a member of Troupe No. 401 of the Berea College Academy.

(Photo by William Welsh, alumnus of Troupe No. 401.)



Recordings of wind and rain were played through most of the play. A huge electric fan placed near the outside door created the illusion of a strong wind when entrances and exits were being made.

For Emily's heather we used a purplish plant that grew on the campus. A similar flower can easily be made with orchid crepe paper and cedar.

Costuming. The women's dresses were practically all made from the same standard pattern, necklines, sleeves, and trimming being varied to suit the individual role. Lucy Barton's "*Historic Costume for the Stage*," published by Walter H. Baker Company, guided us carefully back to the 1840's, where we found long, extremely full skirts, the typical pointed waist, rather severe sleeves, and small collars. The two servants were dressed much the same as the Brontë sisters, except for more drab colors, black aprons, and dust caps.

By making the legs more narrow and attaching black elastic to extend under the shoes, we were able to use old tuxedo trousers for Branwell and the Reverend Mr. Brontë. Both wore white shirts with full sleeves. Christopher, the farmer, was put into a burlap coat, drab gray flannel shirt, and mud-spattered boots.

Make-up. Branwell's make-up was straight, with a good many lines and shadows to show intense dissipation.

Emily wore a dark grease paint to give a "leathery" outdoor look, and her cheekbones were emphasized, making her appear determined and almost gaunt.

Charlotte was made up as late youth or early middle age; her make-up was designed to give her an unhealthy pallor. Crepe hair was fastened underneath her hair net for extra length and weight.

Anne was a straight make-up.

All three girls had their hair parted in the middle, as was the custom of the time.

Christopher, the rough, country fellow, was naturally blond, but we blacked his hair with burnt cork, and gave him an unshaven appearance by sticking on his face very finely cut crepe hair, rather than shaping a beard.

Martha was straight, with an especially ruddy, uncared-for complexion.

Tabby, seventy-five years old, had a

brown, leathery complexion of windburn, heavily lined and shadowed. White crepe hair pasted on the eyebrows gave them a bushy, overhanging look. Her hair was greyed with cornstarch; white mascara may be used.

The Reverend Mr. Brontë, also nearing the age of seventy-five, was made up to look very sallow and pale. We gave him the "lamb-chop" whiskers of white crepe hair, and heavy, overhanging eyebrows were glued on. Then his hair, eyebrows, and whiskers were greyed with aluminum bronze, giving them a natural and smooth look.

The Reverend Mr. Brontë and Tabby's hands were highlighted with yellow and white, and shadowed with gray to emphasize the bony impression of age. Blue lines were drawn to look like veins.

Budget

Stagecraft	\$ 51.17
Costumes	26.87
Publicity	17.41
Make-up	7.00
Miscellaneous (inc. royalty)	55.50
Total	\$157.95

Publicity. The local and the college papers published several short articles dealing with the plot, the members of the cast

and the crew, the direction and progress of the play. A week before production the front page of the local paper carried a picture of the Brontë sisters.

Posters were "stuck" in every available window in town, and several in neighboring towns. All English teachers were requested to explain the play or to give brief comments to their classes. The first performance was given for the Alumni, who responded with favorable criticism, giving us a boost for the second and third performances a week later.

Educational Results. A clearer insight into the lives of the Brontës, and a knowledge of the extreme difficulties under which they wrote, will give to any audience a deeper appreciation of such works as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. To the players it gives unlimited opportunities for historical research in order to truly characterize the members of one of literature's "families of geniuses."

Moor Born has no new lessons to teach the world, but is a significant and beautifully written history.

(Watch for the staging of *Captain Applejack* in the October issue.)

Character	Parts 1 and 2	Parts 3 and 4	Part 5
Anne	Blue printed dress, black shoes, white stockings.	Brown checked dress, white apron, dust cap, brown shoes, white stockings, heavy brown shawl.	Black dress, black shoes, black stockings, wine shawl.
Charlotte	Grey flannel dress with black trim, black shoes, black hat, black cape, black gloves, umbrella, white stockings.	Gray and white checked skirt, white blouse, black shoes, white apron, dust cap, black cape, white stockings.	Black dress, black cape, black shoes, black stockings.
Emily	Dark wine flannel dress, black shoes, white stockings, heavy striped shawl.	Green flannel dress, black shoes, white stockings, white apron, striped shawl.	White nightgown, very long and full, black bedroom slippers.
Branwell	Black trousers, white shirt, black slippers, tan coat, black socks.	Black trousers, white shirt, black shoes, black socks, wine and black dressing gown.	
The Reverend Mr. Brontë	Black trousers, white shirt, white stock, black socks, black dressing gown.	Black trousers and coat, white shirt, white stock, black shoes, black socks.	Same as Parts 1 and 2.
Martha	Blue printed dress, black apron, black shoes, white stockings, white dust cap.	Same as 1 and 2.	Same as 1 and 2.
Tabby	Black printed dress, black apron, black shoes, black stockings, white dust cap.	Same as 1 and 2.	Same as 1 and 2.
Christopher		Brown burlap coat, brown boots, rough gray shirt, gray trousers.	

Motion Picture Appreciation

Edited by HAROLD TURNEY

Chairman, Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College, Los Angeles, Calif.

Yankee Doodle Dandy

A Warner Brothers Picture
Based on the Life Story of George M. Cohan

SOME time ago an alert story scout in the Warner organization realized that there might be a potential audience-appetite for a new type of national hero—men personifying the spirit of the United States of America rather than men daring-to-do with gun, sword or lariat.

Knute Rockne, All American was one of the first pictures to prove this new field. Then came *Sergeant York* as a morale builder at the moment the nation was in a receptive mood.

A third picture in this category is *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. It is a life story, of course—that of a great American who probably never stepped on a football field in his life, but still knew what it took to please a crowd. One who never fired a gun on field of battle, but who gave highest patriotic service to his country. Service for which he, like Sergeant Alvin York, received the Congressional Medal of Honor, and from President Franklin Roosevelt himself in the White House study. The subject of this new motion picture biographical drama is George Michael Cohan, the internationally famous actor-dancer-singer-composer-playwright-director-producer of the stage.

It is a flag waver without apology, for all of his life, in fact, from the very day of his birth, George M. Cohan was a flag waver, marching at the head of a parade; an Irish-American with red, white, and blue blood in his veins and the words of the Declaration of Independence in front of his eyes. Cohan's birthday was even on the Fourth of July, in 1878. The place was Providence, Rhode Island.

Hollywood had been negotiating with Mr. Cohan for the rights to film his life-story for many years but George M. played hard to get. Finally, a couple of years ago, he approached Ed McNamara, an actor-friend of James Cagney's, and asked, as one good Irish-American of another: "What kind of a guy is this Cagney? Pretty nice?" Apparently McNamara answered yes, he was; for soon things began to happen. There were rumors that M. G. M. was after Cohan's life story, and then that Sam Goldwyn wanted it for Fred Astaire. An inside tip was flashed to Warner Bros. that they could still "get in on it." And they did—hook, line, and sinker except that Cohan specified that Cagney and nobody else, could play the title role. In addition he made three self-protective stipulations—

his personal approval of every page of the script before it could be filmed, his verification of every player in the cast, and—a unique point for Hollywood—that there could be no messy, kissing, love scenes, no attempt to write in tragedy unless it came in its natural course.

During the production Mr. Cohan spent considerable time in Hollywood. He compiled personally all of the material used in the film and superintended its transfer; first into a script by Robert Buckner, and second, onto film directed by Michael Curtiz. It was not an easy task, for Mr. Cohan, during his twenty years of almost incredible creative effort in the theater, wrote and produced thirty-one plays, composed more than five hundred songs and musical numbers, and produced, owned, controlled, or was interested in, actively or financially, 128 theatrical attractions.

Therefore the screenplay only touches the essential highlights of such an amazing career. *Little Johnny Jones*, produced by Cohan at the Liberty Theatre, New York, in 1904, as his first Broadway effort is given considerable emphasis in the picture. So is *Popularity*, Cohan's first attempt at straight drama—and his first failure. So is *I'd Rather Be Right*, the musical comedy,

by George S. Kaufman and Mose Hart, which brought Cohan out of long retirement in 1940 and sent him back to the Broadway he loved doing an amusing impersonation of President Roosevelt.

In *Tankee Doodle Dandy*, Mr. Cohan is first shown as an un-schooled lad of seven, appearing in back-country vaudeville as a precocious trick violin player, with his mother and father as an Irish dancing team. Then when his sister Josie grew up to ten, and George was twelve, the act became the Four Cohans, known from coast-to-coast, but never seen on Broadway. The film shows how George finally "crashed" Broadway, joined hands with Sam H. Harris, and became the most successful theatrical producer America has ever known. His great plays and musical comedies are shown in a kaleidoscopic sequence of cutback and flashes and montage, with plenty of footage for his better remembered hits.

Music includes such unforgettable Cohan numbers as "So Long, Mary," "Give My Regards to Broadway," "You Remind Me of My Mother," "I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy," "I Guess I'll Have to Telegraph My Baby," "You're a Grand Old Flag," "Forty-five Minutes From Broadway," "Harrigan (H, a, double-r, i, g-a-n spells Harrigan)," "Mary's A Grand Old Name," "A Boy Without a Sweetheart and a Girl Without a Beau," and "Off the Record," from *I'd Rather Be Right*.

After the appointment of James Cagney the rest of the casting was comparatively simple. Jeanne Cagney, sister of James, got the Cohan approval to portray Cohan's sister, Josie, unhesitatingly. It is the first time James and Jeanne Cagney have ever been together on the screen, and the first brother and sister combination to be so featured since Mary and Jack Pickford played together a number of years ago.

Walter Huston, close friend of George M. Cohan's for many years, fell naturally into the part of Cohan's father, Jerry. His mother, Nellie, took a little more search and effort. The part finally went to Rosemary DeCamp, well known as a radio actress of early morning "soap operas," and with but brief picture experience in *Cheers for Miss Bishop* and *Hold Back the Dawn*.

Joan Leslie was next assigned as Mary, the only girl in Cohan's screen life, a sort of composite of Ethel Levey, the actress from whom he was divorced, and the present Mrs. Cohan. After a series of featured roles, seventeen-year-old Miss Leslie was promoted to star status upon the basis of critical and public reaction to her portrayals opposite Gary Cooper in *Sergeant York* and in *The Male Animal*.

Irene Manning, light opera and concert star interprets the role of Fay Templeton, famed star of the Weber and Fields Music Hall, who was also in some early Cohan shows. Eddie Foy, Jr., impersonates his father, another old-time vaudeville and Cohan star. A dramatic highspot of the film is the introduction

STAGE TO SCREEN

Completed—Awaiting Release

Arsenic and Old Lace (WB) by Joseph Kesselring, directed by Frank Capra with Cary Grant, Priscilla Lane, Raymond Massey, Peter Lorre.

I Married An Angel (MGM), modern Rodgers and Hart musical comedy, directed by Roy del Ruth and starring Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald.

Night Before Christmas (WB) by Laura and S. J. Perelman, starring Edward G. Robinson.

Panama Hattie (MGM) directed by Norman McLeod with Ann Sothern.

Rio Rita (MGM) starring Abbott and Costello.

We Were Dancing (MGM) from the one-act play by Noel Coward in his series *Tonight At 8:30*, directed by Sidney Franklin with Norma Shearer, Melvyn Douglas, Ian Hunter.

Now Before the Cameras

Claudia (UA) to be produced by David O. Selznick from the play by Rose Franken with the original stage star, Dorothy McGuire.

George Washington Slept Here (WB) by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart to star Jack Benny.

My Sister Eileen (Col) by Jerome Chodorov and Joseph Fields, to star Rosalind Russell.



Jeanne Cagney, James Cagney, Joan Leslie, Walter Huston and Rosemary DeCamp in "You're A Grand Old Flag" from *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

by Frances Langford of Cohan's famous war song, "Over There," identically as it was presented at Camp Merritt, Long Island, in 1917. At that time Nora Bayes was a singer.

Several important players were assigned roles of various theater managers of olden days. Richard Whorf, long a member of the Alfred Lunt-Lynn Fontanne stock company, plays Sam Harris, Cohan's long-time partner; George Barbier, Abraham Erlanger, famous member of the famous managers, Klaw and Erlanger, and Walter Catlett, another theater owner of the period.

BECAUSE George M. was no mean stepper, Cagney had to study and rehearse the difficult Cohan dance routines for four months before he attempted photographing them at the end of the picture's production. After devoting a full day to acting in the story portion of the film, from seven a. m. to five p. m., he gave two hours daily, from six to eight p. m., in practicing the dances. His goal was not only to attain perfection in the step but also to recapture the distinctive touches of personality, mannerism, and gesture, with which the dances were performed by the stage star.

Cagney's dancing coach was famous Johnny Boyle, a former member of the old Cohan and Harris Minstrels, "a dancer's dancer," who is rated by professionals as the greatest heel-and-toe perfectionist in the theater today. Misfortune struck Boyle during the first month he started to work with Cagney. He broke his right ankle showing Jimmy a difficult step and thereafter had to beat out the intricate rhythms on a table with his palms and fingers.

Excellent, popular reading before seeing *Yankee Doodle Dandy* is the George M. Cohan autobiography entitled "Twenty Years of Broadway and the Years It Took to Get There", published by Harpers.

William Collier, Sr., dean of American farceurs, who started his stage career in 1879, when George was one year old, was special consultant while the screenplay was being written and technical adviser to director Michael Curtiz during the filming. Collier was thirteen when he made his debut in a children's company performing *H.M.S. Pinafore* professionally. He has been an intimate friend of Cohan's for many years, but his selection as adviser on *Yankee Doodle Dandy* was based on more than his knowledge of Cohan's activities. Aside from following the main events in Cohan's life, the picture constitutes a virtual cavalcade of the American theater from 1878 to date, and it was felt that no man today knows more about those 63 years of the American stage than "Willie" Collier.

Production Credits *YANKEE DOODLE DANDY*

Screenplay by Robert Buckner and Edmund Joseph from an original story by Robert Buckner

Lyrics and Music by George M. Cohan

Directed by Michael Curtiz

Photographed by James Wong Howe, A.S.C.

Dance Numbers Staged and Directed by

Leroy Prinz and Seymour Felix

George M. Cohan.....James Cagney

Jerry Cohan, his father.....Walter Huston

Nellie Cohan, his mother.....Rosemary DeCamp

Josie Cohan, his sister.....Jeanne Cagney

Mary Cohan, his wife.....Joan Leslie

Sam Harris, his manager....Richard Whorf

The studio construction department had to build 285 separate sets within which to tell the involved story. Two large theater stages were built, facing one another, on one of Warner's largest sound stages, to keep the cameras turning. Twelve different theaters, in each of which "The Four Cohans" or son George made showmanship history, are shown in the film, and carry from gas-lighted footlights up to the present day. The Union Square Theater is one of the first. This sequence shows the moment when Cohan, having written a song for "Mary," a green soubrette billed as "The Dixie Nightingale," has to push her before the footlights to get the song sung.

Filming was not easy. The cameramen were cramped for angles, since the story is told mostly from a backstage point of view.

One item on the prop list caused considerable trouble. For the "You're A Grand Old Flag" number, the director needed 520 American flags of assorted sizes. But the wholesale order could not be filled by local companies and the Property Department had to special-order them from the only plant on the coast equipped to make them, a factory in San Francisco. Researches found that the complication resulted from a combination of the sudden patriotic demand for American flags and the fact that many were manufactured in Japan before the war.

During the production of *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, someone asked Curtiz, the director, "How do you like your new picture, Mike?" Out came the answer, "Oh, this is marvelous, wonderful. This time I work mitout horses, guns, cowboys, airplanes, Indians, and Errol Flynn."

The Technical Director's Page

by ARNOLD S. GILLETTE

Technical Director, University Theatre, State University
of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa

"STYLIZATION"

WHEN the art and science of scenic design has been reduced to its least common denominator it may be most effectively summed up by the one word "environment." After all is said and done, the setting that provides a perfect environment for the idea of a play, that presents a fitting background for the actors and their business, is the ideal stage setting. It makes little difference how the designer conceived his ideas for the settings; certainly no one will care tremendously whether he is a disciple of this or that school of thought or whether he has worked in an unorthodox method so long as the finished setting has "fitted" the play and its business.

That the setting should be expressive of and fitted to a particular play has long been an accepted fact. The analogy of "fitting" scenery to a play may be carried farther. I rather like to look upon plays as having personalities. And like people, these personalities may reflect the qualities of seriousness, dignity, and tragedy or in a lighter vein those qualities of comedy, satire, and farce. Were these personalities housed in individuals, in place of plays, no one would expect to see the same costume fit one and all with equal success. The style that is most becoming to one will likely seem completely out of place and ill-suited to another. So it is with scenic design. It's the designer's biggest job to understand the play he proposes to cloth with scenery well enough to choose a style of setting that enhances and becomes it.

I do not mean that the designer should go about this procedure in a purely mechanical manner. There is considerably more to it than thumbing through ones notes on styles and selecting one at random that he proposes to adapt to his needs. The reading of the play will have established the general mood and spirit of the piece and it is these two qualities that the designer attempts to reflect in his settings. It may so happen that a severe formal setting seems most expressive, or perhaps a simplified setting of some kind seem better suited to this particular play. More often than not, if the designer has given his imagination and feelings free rein, his settings may not fall within the characteristics of any particular style but perhaps be a combination of several or even introduce new elements and forms. There is little merit in studiously designing within the limits of a given style for the questionable result of pleasing certain academicians who make a fetish of neatly cataloguing and naming

every development in art and science. A much more wholesome philosophy is that of designing to fit a specific play and let the styles fall where they may.

I do feel that a thorough understanding of the established styles in scenic design should be a part of every designer's background if for no other reason that such a knowledge will provide him with additional and valuable tools that will better fit him for coping with the problems in a field that boasts an amazing number of limitations.

CAN you imagine Mickey Mouse scampering around against a background done in the manner of the scenery for *Mice and Men*? Or how about seeing Peter Pan and his band trying to feet at home in scenery carried out in the same fashion as that used for *Winterset*? The answer is too obvious to bother mentioning. That something special is demanded in the way of scenery for characters such as these is clear. The problem to anyone not understanding stylization might seem perplexing indeed. Stylization is a form of scenic design that capitalizes on the bold use of color and an exaggeration of form and line that results in settings that are more conventionalized than realistic. The results of a well-stylized setting are frequently amusing in a pictorial way, they are nearly always obvious in motif and invariably serve to accentuate the unreality of the theatre.

Stylization seems best when its adapted to plays of a fanciful nature such as children's plays; exotic plays like *Tobias and the Angel*; allegorical plays like the *Blue Bird*, while operettas, extravaganzas, satirical and farcical plays seem to be ill at ease against any other type of setting.

The keynote of the stylized setting is usually established by the designer who endeavors to create a scheme of decoration in some way that is characteristic of the play, the author, the period, the locale or the occasion. Just what particular object the designer may choose as a motif for his set is pretty much a matter of personal preference. One designer may stylize through color alone, another will work with perspective, while form and even materials may be capitalized upon. Many times of course all the elements of a composition will have been treated in a fanciful manner.

Frequently the stylized setting is called upon to help tell an amusing story by creating an environment that is in itself pictorially amusing. It is at just this point that many designers succeed with their amusing sets to such a degree that the settings prove to be a distraction rather

than a help. One of the most difficult problems in designing is maintaining that state of balance between background and play to insure a unified production rather than the over emphasis of any one element.

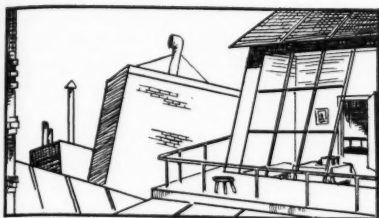
One would have a difficult time selecting a more perfect example of stylization than the numerous Walt Disney productions such as *Snow White and The Seven Dwarfs* and *Pinocchio*. In these two pictures not only the backgrounds but the characters have all been stylized to the same degree that presents a unity of production practically impossible to achieve on the legitimate stage. Unfortunately, the form of the human figure can be altered just so much by costumes and make-up that there always seems to be a disagreement in the degree of stylization between the actors and the scenery.

Good examples of stylized stage settings are much more difficult to find than in the animated pictures, yet there are two productions I'd like to discuss with you, for the designers in each case have used unusual mediums to achieve rather startling results.

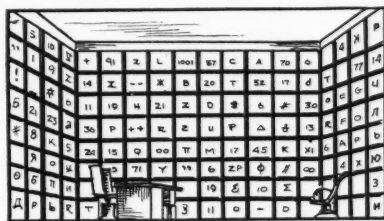
A. Akimov did a masterly job of stylizing the settings for a French farce called *My Crime* that was produced at the Comedy Theatre in Leningrad. Although he made some use of exaggerated color the unusual handling of line and perspective set apart these designs from the ordinary run of stylized stage setting.

In order to appreciate how well these designs fitted this play a very brief account of *My Crime* follows: It seems that a young girl studying in Paris is taken into custody and falsely accused of murder. The facts that the crime happens to be a murder and that the girl is very attractive make excellent news copy which naturally attracts considerable attention. The girl soon finds herself the center of all attention with manufacturers seeking her endorsement for their products. In short our heroine is rapidly becoming wealthy. Finally, the real murderer turns up seeking his share of the spoils which results in a whole series of perfectly ludicrous situations.

Akimov, who was both designer and director, introduced the play with the interesting and unusual design shown in Sketch I. This represented the Paris studio, which under more ordinary treatment would have been staged as an interior. With Akimov's arrangement this setting presented a view of both exterior and interior with the interior being seen through the large studio window. The small balcony outside the window was practical and was used a great deal for the business of this scene. A strong element of stylization was introduced into this scene by the exaggerated treatment of form. Although the objects are readily recognized as being based upon reality, the substitution of slanting and angular lines for all true vertical lines lent this arrangement of roof tops and buildings



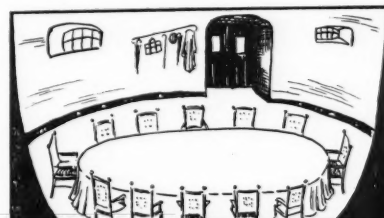
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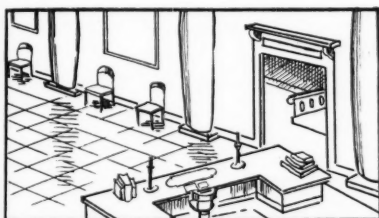
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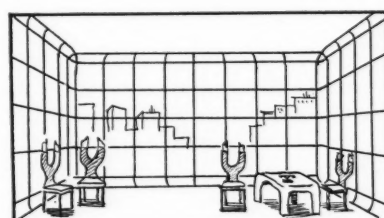
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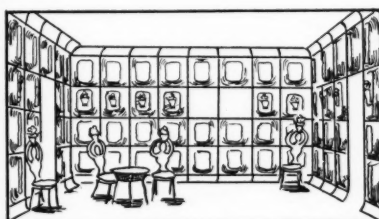
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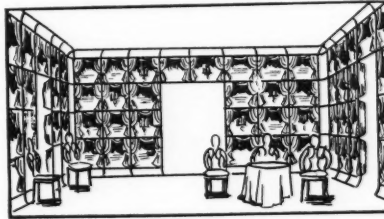
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VI



VII



VIII

considerable charm. Sketch II, the Police Commissioner's Office, was as unusual in its conception as the first scene. The rising curtain revealed a startling combination of horizontal and vertical black lines that enclosed white squares, which on closer examination turned out to be filing cabinets. The room was furnished with two chairs and a desk, but there all semblance to reality ceased for there was not the slightest suggestion of either doors or windows. This fact alone led to considerable amusement during this scene for when the commissioner called his secretary or when any of the characters entered or left the stage they did so through a different combination of 'filing cases' which opened as a door.

In the third setting Akimov made use of forced perspective by reducing the height of the columns the farther they were placed up stage. The spaces between the columns were filled with tightly pleated translucent material that was brilliantly lighted from off stage. As in the preceding scene no doorways were visible. Entrances into the setting were made through a trap in the stage floor that was con-

cealed by the huge pile of presents that had been sent to the apartment of our heroine.

The fourth and fifth settings really presented us with something different. As the curtain rose on these two settings they succeeded in giving the spectator the queer sensation that he was viewing the stage from a vantage point somewhere near the ceiling over the auditorium. In each case a vast expanse of the stage floor was visible while even the actors appeared to be considerably below the observers eye level. To say that the effect was startling and novel is a masterly job of understatement but after the three preceding designs we were prepared for practically anything. Both of these designs were realized on stage by the application of the same principle; a sharply inclined ramp which proved to be the only practical section of the stage floor that could be used by the actors formed the basis of the designs. The remainder of the setting was painted on a vertically hung drop. The jury room, shown in the fourth sketch, consisted of a huge oval table surrounded by twelve chairs that were mounted on

the inclined ramp and provided the only practical properties within the setting. The opening of this scene found all the jurymen seated about the table where they remained throughout the scene, had they attempted to do anything more than stand they undoubtedly would have lost their footing and slipped from the ramp. That area of the floor shown in the sketch, the curved baseboard and the walls, the windows and the hat rack, were all painted on a flat drop that was hung parallel with the proscenium opening in the customary fashion. The double doors were practical and were used on several occasions by the police sergeant who when summoned by the head jurymen, opened one of the doors and stood in the doorway to receive his instructions. He was very careful not to come farther into the room than the threshold, for had he done so he would have fallen some seven or eight feet to the stage floor.

The amusing absurdity established by the preceding designs reached a climax with the last setting. This spacious-appearing office had an extremely restricted acting area on the inclined ramp that supported the desk in the foreground, while the majority of the design, the floor, the column-studded wall and the hallway were realized by drops. In this scene two drops were used. The first drop had, in addition to the painted floor and paneled wall, a practical cut-out doorway through which all entrances were made. The columns and the three chairs that lined the wall were not painted on but were actual three dimensional units that had been applied to the face of the drop. A second drop served as a backing for the first.

THE use of unusual building materials can be employed by the designer in creating stylized settings just as effectively as the more commonly used mediums. The possibilities of originality along these lines has hardly been touched. I'm certain that very few of us would look upon chromium pipe and wicker clothes baskets as the basic materials for building three interior settings. Yet these were exactly the materials used in creating the settings designed by Tishler for a production of *The School for Taxpayers* produced at the Zavadski Theatre in Moscow.

It was the director's suggestions to Tishler that he attempt to find the most amusing scenic solution possible for this farce and one that at the same time could be easily stored and handled within the cramped quarters of the stage. Anyone fortunate enough to see this production will readily agree that Tishler's designs were a tremendous success from both points of view.

The sixth sketch illustrates the method used to enclose the ramped stage with a simple frame work of chromium pipe. This was backed with a very sketchily done city ground row. The upraised arms of the wicker chair backs seemed delight-

(Continued on page 22)

With the Radio Editor

A page published for teachers and students interested in radio activities at the high school level. Comments and suggestions from readers are welcomed.

Edited by G. HARRY WRIGHT

Department of Speech, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

IN the March issue we talked about developing variety in our radio tastes and versatility in our listening habits. You remember we stated that we should learn to recognize and enjoy good programs of all types and to recognize and avoid bad programs. In other words, the important thing about a program is not the question of whether it is of a particular type that we happen to like but rather whether it is well done and a good representative of whatever type it may be. What we are trying to point out in concrete terms is that a jive program which is extremely well done is better than the most highbrow educational program if the latter comes off badly.

Now somebody asks: "Just what is a good program and what are the factors which distinguish it from one not so good?"

This is a bit confusing in view of the fact that there are so many kinds of programs with so many different purposes and methods. In the long run, however, qualities of goodness and badness are much the same for all types of programs.

The first thing that makes a program good or bad is the idea upon which it is based. If this is sound and worth while, the program has a fair chance of succeeding. If the idea is foolish or impractical, the program is doomed from the very beginning.

One program idea that has succeeded in many forms over a period of years is the quiz program. All these programs have come in for a lot of spoofing by the intellectuals. The fact remains that the idea behind them is essentially sound and valuable. Everybody likes to participate in what is going on around him. The quiz program gives him that opportunity. Everybody likes to match his wits against the other fellow. The quiz program permits this too. Everybody likes to believe that he is well-informed. The quiz program plays up to this belief by making the questions easy.

There have been some clever variations of the quiz idea in recent years. "Information, Please", for example, furnishes a board of clever, wisecracking experts whom we may try to confound by sending in difficult questions. "Battle of the Sexes" arrays men against women, thus assuring interest and loyalty from every listener. "True or False" does much the same thing by lining up a women's team against a men's team. "Take It or Leave It" adds the gambling element by making it possible for a contestant to win a large sum or lose it all if he has sufficient daring of spirit.

All of these ideas are basically sound and make for an interesting and listenable program. A few years ago an idea was attempted which was not sound. That is, it attempted to vary the quiz program by furnishing the answers and having the contestant try to furnish the question which the answer fitted. In practice this turned out to be merely confusing and the program failed.

The second important factor in the program is the script. Just as in the theatre the play is the thing, so in radio the script is the thing and no program can succeed without a script which is carefully and skilfully written. First of all, the dialogue. It must be true to life; it must sound like something that real people in a real situation would say. In the second place, the actions or decisions of the characters must be psychologically true. You are offended

Book Review

A Course of Study in Radio Appreciation, by Alice P. Sterner. A monograph published by EDUCATIONAL AND RECREATIONAL GUIDES, INC., New York City.

HIGH SCHOOL teachers of English, particularly those who attempt to give their students an appreciation of the nature of radio and its contribution to modern living, should get a copy of Alice P. Sterner's *A Course of Study in Radio Appreciation* and look it over very carefully.

The course has an impressive list of ten objectives, each of which is worth while and possible of achievement. The first one seems to me most important: "To broaden and enrich the world in which the student lives by his proper use of radio." If this alone can be accomplished, then the effort is worth while.

Twenty-two units make up the course, beginning with the two elements of raw material, namely, the untrained student and the radio programs to which he has habitually listened, and ending with a comprehensive examination of the meaning of radio to society and to the individual. The first unit examines the student's listening habits and his opinions on radio. The next one examines the listening process and attempts to develop the student's skill in listening. Then come units covering all the types of radio programs, followed by consideration of such items as propaganda, censorship, advertising, history and organization of the radio industry, foreign broadcasting, radio and the home, planning our listening, radio technicalities, and influence of radio.

The course has three outstanding virtues. First, it is educationally sound. The activities suggested center around the student, and are full of excellent motivation. Every student should enjoy this course to the full. Second, it is comprehensive. It contains opportunities for learning just about everything worth knowing about radio and how to use it. Third, it is flexible, and allows great freedom for adaptation to individual situations.

if in reading a story, you are confronted by a character reacting as no human being would ever react. This is equally true on the air. The arrangement of the parts of the story must be such as to give continuity, suspense, and climax. If a program is anti-climactic, it is sure to bore its audience. These requirements of a script are simple enough but many programs are wrecked because they were not met in the writing.

The third important factor in a good program is production—that is, the directing and the handling of technical matters such as sound effects, musical bridges, and other forms of transitions, and timing. Even if a program idea is sound and the script is well-written, it will not come out of the loud speaker as a smooth and satisfactory program if the pace is too slow or too fast, if music cues are mis-handled, if inappropriate types of scene transition are used, or if the timing is bad. In short, awkwardness in production can make any program bad. This is usually encountered in school productions and in staff broadcasts from small stations. Our networks are noted for the smoothness and competence of their production work.

The last item in the evaluation of a program is the performers themselves, be they actors, announcers, or musicians. Other things being equal, that program is best which is interpreted most skilfully and most sincerely by the artist before the microphone. Here again, American network broadcasting is particularly fortunate for it has at its disposal an ever-growing group of more than competent singers, actors, and musicians of all types.

These then are a few of the things that one needs to take into consideration in passing judgment on a program.

In some of the paragraphs above, I seem to have been talking about dramatic programs and in others, musical ones but the factors are pretty much the same in all cases. If in a dramatic program you want naturalness in dialogue and spontaneity in interpretation, you need exactly the same things in the master of ceremonies of a variety program and in the question master of a quiz program. You even need it in the announcer of a musical program. If a program has a sound idea behind it, if it has a well-written script, skilful production, and sincere and sympathetic interpretation, it is a good program, and after a consideration of these factors you will know why it is a good program.

There is another reason for saying all of this, however. Not only will consideration of these factors enable Thespians to enjoy radio programs more and to get more from them, but it will also enable them to establish standards in their own broadcasting work; for what is true of a good professional program is also true of a good high school program and only by approaching the standards which we set for the professionals can we make our own programs as good as they ought to be.

Exercises in Dramatics

by MIRIAM A. FRANKLIN

Director for the Division of Speech, Grove City College, Grove City, Pa.

The Eyes Speak

THE eyes talk more than we realize. We have grown so in the habit of talking with our eyes that we do it constantly in real life. When we go to the theatre we unconsciously watch for cues given by the players' eyes. However, many actors do not realize how the audience watches them and they neglect to make their eyes act.

But let us concentrate now on only one of the eyes' tasks—that of making a location or person important. When a character speaks of going he may cast a quick glance toward the door; when someone's entrance is to be made important several characters may look in the direction from which he will come. An object, a person, a part of the room, a noise, may each receive a hurried glance, or nod in its direction, if it is to be made significant.

If the item has no special significance it is not necessary to point it. Nor should a glance be converted into a look unless you wish to direct very special attention. Since the eye work can be overdone, try to use discretion. Never fail, however, to make your eyes work for you while acting; their work correlated closely with action and gesture is very important.

Exercises:

The Ghost Train*

The scene for *The Ghost Train*, by Arnold Ridley, is laid in a small railroad station at night. Several stranded travelers have been listening to Saul, the station master, tell weird stories.

Richard (*Rising; crossing to L. C.*): Well, Station Master, your story has been very entertaining, but a bit gruesome. I'm sorry I can't believe it all, but—*(A face lighted up by a green flash is seen for an instant at window up L.)*

Peggy (*Seated down L., seeing face at window, rises with a scream*): A-a-ah! Look! *(ALL rise quickly.)*

Richard (*Up L. C.*): What!

Charles (*Down L.*): What! *(Together.)*

Miss Bourne (*Down C.*): Ah!

Peggy: I saw someone looking in through that window. *(The Men exchange a look and then cross up. Charles opens C. door and exits, followed by Richard and Teddie. Saul follows up to door C., then crosses and looks off through ticket office door R.; then exits R.)*

Charles (*Returning, crosses to Peggy*): No one about, Pegs!

Richard (*Following him in, goes to up L.*): Not a soul! *(Teddie follows in and crosses to down R.)*

Elsie (*Standing by window up L. C.*): Must have been your imagination, I guess.

Peggy (*To Miss Bourne, who has seated herself again on bench L. C.*): I saw it most distinctly!

Miss Bourne: This really is a most unpleasant station.

Teddie: One of those jolly old ghosts, perhaps.

Richard: Shut up, you fool.

Teddie (*Seated down R.*): Sorry!

Charles (*Down L.*): It must have been your imagination, Pegs.

Peggy (*Down L. by Charles*): Perhaps so—I'm sorry if I startled you.

Elsie (*Up L. C.*): I wasn't afraid at all!

Richard (*Up L.*): That's the worst of ghost stories, Mrs. Murdock. They are apt to make the best of us jumpy, though most of us haven't the moral courage to own up to it.

Elsie (*Sharply*): Thank you.

Richard: I wasn't referring to you. *(Saul enters from up R.)*: Oh, I say, Station Master, can't you get us some more coal? This fire is almost out.

Saul: Why, we ain't got a bit left, sir. We expect some in from Rockland tomorrow.

Miss Bourne: It's really awfully cold and damp. It'll about finish my old bird—the egg'll be frozen—and all this trouble for nothing!

Teddie (*Rising; to R. C.*): Oh, do cheer up, people—it's sure to be worse.

Miss Bourne (*Rising; to him R. C. She has cage with her*): It's all very well for you to talk, young man—you have landed us in this most unpleasant situation, and instead of expressing regrets—no—no—no—no! *(She advances to him, backing him up till he sits on chair R.)* All you can do is to sit and make fun of us. You're an impudent, ill-mannered puppy, sir. My poor sister will be sitting up all night for me, and here I am in a cold railway station, with ghosts—ghosts and things all over the place—and all you can do is to sit there and laugh. I hate the sight of you—I will not stop in the room another minute with you. Try and lead a better life—and don't come near me. *(She strikes his extended hand a sharp blow, takes cage and crosses up into ticket office up R. She continues off R.)* Oh—Oh—Oh; Look here! *(Comes back into room, pointing off R.)*

Charles (*Crossing to her up R.*): What's the matter?

Miss Bourne (*Pointing off R.*): I saw something move in there.

Charles (*Goes off up R. and immediately returns*): Why, that's only a sack of potatoes, on the floor.

Miss Bourne (*Giving her skirts a hitch*): Oh, I do so hate potatoes! *(Drops on bench up R.)*

Elsie (*Crosses and sits beside her*): It's all right, Miss Bourne—really it is.

Saul: Well, I'll get my lantern, and be off home.

Richard: Wait a minute?

Saul: No, sir! I wouldn't stay here another minute—not for a thousand dollars! I know too much about this station!

Enter Angela**

IN the following scene from *Enter Angela*, by Virginia Perdue, Octavia, Hatter and her family are without electric lights. Because the electric bill has not been paid the power company has turned off the current. A number of guests are present.

In this scene there are numerous oppor-

tunities for eye work to emphasize objects, persons, and places. Players will glance at Bill's billfold and the money; Octavia will suggest darkness by glancing around the room; Bill surveys the room when he speaks of the house; Octavia may glance toward the window when she speaks about the street lamps. A look toward the door would seem natural when she speaks of Frances, and another toward the door just before she starts to leave the room.

Octavia: Oh, Bill, this is a very dear friend of ours, Max Phillips. Mr. Smith.

Max: How do you do.

Bill (*As they shake hands*): How do you do, sir.

Octavia: Max is going to get the lights turned on for us.

Max: I'll try, Octavia. But I should have the money ready.

Octavia: If I had had the money, this wouldn't be necessary. Max, wouldn't they take your word?

Bill (*Taking a billfold from his pocket*): Will you permit me, Mrs. Hatter? It would be a pleasure.

Octavia (*Brightly*): Oh, Bill has some money! Everything has arranged itself nicely. It generally does, I find. *(To Bill)* Twenty dollars, my dear. I'll repay it very soon—when my pupils pay me next week. *(She takes money from Bill and hands it to Max.)*

Max: Do you owe that much, Octavia?

Octavia: I'm afraid so. I really shouldn't let it run on so long, but everything costs so much. There is never any left for necessities. *(As Max starts out)* Good luck, Max. It's sweet of you to go.

Max: I'll do what I can, Octavia. You can't get along without electricity and gas. *(He goes out rear.)*

Octavia (*At the door; calling*): Come back later and bring your violin. We will have music. *(To Bill.)* Max is a superb artist. *(With considerable ardor.)* A wonderful man!—How dark it is in here. *(She picks up the candles from the table and lights others on the mantel.)* There's really something quite festive about candlelight, don't you think?

Bill: Very. Lucky for me that Anthony picked me up at the station—by mistake.

Octavia: Wasn't that amusing of Anthony? The pleasure is ours, though, I assure you.

Bill (*Surveying the room*): Nice place you've got here.

Octavia: It's been our home for some time. Of course it's an old-fashioned neighborhood, but the view is magnificent. I could wish the other houses were not so close, but then—

Bill: You have noisy neighbors?

Octavia (*Rearranging the things on table down R.*): Very! They are always phoning to complain about the piano, or the vocalizing.

Bill (*Strolling about casually*): It's a pretty big house. Must cost you plenty to run it.

Octavia: It does, my friend. But with three children and my music lessons, we must have room.

Bill (*Coming down to table*): Ever think of selling?

Octavia: No. Until the children have their start in life, that's out of the question. I do hope Max is successful about the lights. *(Laughs.)* Frances thinks there's something wrong at the power house. Now I'm in deadly fear she'll look out of the window and see the street lamps.

Bill: Angela told me that you would all like to make an impression on Miss Smith.

Octavia (*Simply*): If she gives a good report about the children, my sister will help them.

Bill: You wouldn't have to bother with her, if you could sell the house at a good price.

Octavia: But I have my own ideas as to a good price, and no one ever agrees with me. There have been offers—

Bill (*Quickly*): Recently?

(Continued on next page)

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"STYLIZATION"

(Continued from page 19)

fully symbolic of the over-burdened taxpayer. This set supposedly represented the office of a man who had discovered a method of avoiding the payment of taxes, whereupon he promptly opens a school to profit by his knowledge.

For the second act we find the spaces between the pipes filled with wicker baskets, bottom side in, and prominently displayed on the bottom were wicker flower baskets with crepe paper flowers. There was a complete change of furniture. This time Tishler resorted to chair backs that represented coy maidens supporting wicker flower baskets on their heads. The change into the last act was made by reversing the position of all baskets, this time with the bottom side out. The interior of each basket was tastefully 'done' with small light blue curtains while small candelabras decorated the bottom of each alternate basket.

Under ordinary conditions such a scheme of decoration might prove overpowering but in this production the acting, make-up, costuming and direction were all on the same delightfully absurd plane as the scenery.

In selecting these plays for discussion I have deliberately chosen those productions which had designs that had received highly imaginative treatment. They well could have been designs that you personally did not care about. But if they attracted enough attention to even warrant your disapproval they will have served their purpose. For in forcing one to form an opinion they will have compelled one to think about the matter of design and its only by thinking that desire to experiment is born.

Octavia: Within the last few days.

Bill (*Casually*): Who from?

Octavia: I really don't know. They came through Mr. Barton, an agent.

Bill: I might be interested in buying this place myself, Mrs. Hatter.

Octavia: Whatever for?

Bill: Always wanted to own one of these hilltop houses. Maybe I could offer you a price you'd accept.

Octavia: I doubt it. But I'm sure you could buy one of a dozen houses in the neighborhood quite as comfortable as mine.

Bill: What are you asking for your place, Mrs. Hatter?

Octavia: Do call me "Octavia". Everyone does.

Bill: I'd love to—Octavia. Now, about the house—

Octavia: Oh, the house. I couldn't take less than twenty thousand.

Bill (*Amazed*): Twenty thousand! For this old ark? (*Hastily*) Of course it's charming and has atmosphere. But you've got to consider real estate values. You could hardly expect more than a thousand over the mortgage.

Octavia: I must see what's keeping Frances and the boys. (*She starts toward door L.*)

Bill: I'll make it fifteen hundred over the mortgage.

Octavia (*Pleasantly*): Why, Bill, I believe you're serious. Not thinking of getting married, are you, my dear boy?

Bill: Would you consider two thousand?

Octavia (*At door now*): My price is twenty thousand, Bill.



Scene from *You Can't Take It With You* as given by members of Troupe No. 94 at the York Community High School of Elmhurst, Ill. Directed by Miss Doris E. White.

On the High School Stage

News about interesting and important events in the field of high school dramatics. Dramatics directors are urged to contribute brief articles concerning their major activities from month to month.

Marlinton, W. Va.

THIRTEEN students took the Thespian pledge as charter members of Troupe No. 36 at an impressive induction ceremony held at the Marlinton High School on February 11, with Mrs. Gordon G. Mark, troupe founder and sponsor. Assisting Mrs. Mark at the ceremony was Mr. Reed Davis, a member of the earlier troupe established at this school several years ago. Mr. Davis is now a member of the faculty. Following the ceremony, the troupe attended a showing of *Hold Back The Dawn* at a local theatre. Mrs. Mark reports that new interest now exists for dramatics in her school, and that her troupe expects to sponsor many projects as long as it remains under her leadership.

Chester, Ill.

WELL received was the performance of *Don't Take My Penny* on February 11 at the Chester High School (Thespian Troupe No. 238), with Miss Annette Krumsiek directing. Bob Wright served as stage manager, while Maurice Nixon and Arden Ruddel looked after the scenery. Among those who played important roles were Charlotte Schall, Norma Auld, Leitha Mae Nagel, Paul Hopkins, and Bob Lahr.—*Paul Hopkins, Secretary.*

Cheney, Wash.

THE first major play of the year, *Our Town*, was given on February 27 at the Cheney High School (Thespian Troupe No. 267), with Miss Mary C. Bell directing. Thespians assisted in the selection of this play and took prominent roles in its production. The spring program will include the senior class play, as well as several skits and one-act plays. As a result of the unusual interest in dramatics this year, a number of students are qualifying for membership in the troupe. Miss Bell has already done much to create new interest in dramatics, although this is her first year as troupe sponsor.

Lawrenceville, Ill.

TWO major plays were included in the present drama season at the Lawrenceville High School (Thespian Troupe No. 446), with Miss Bessie A. Seed as director. The first production of the year, *Ever Since Eve*, was given by the Junior Class on December 11. The second play, *What A Life*, was given in April by

the Senior Class. The season also included the production of one-act plays and radio broadcasts over Station WBBM at Vincennes, Indiana.—*Elizabeth Ann Fitzpatrick, Secretary.*

Idaho Falls, Idaho

THE presentation of radio plays has been a major project of members of Thespian Troupe No. 480 of the Idaho Falls High School this spring. This troupe was established recently under the leadership of Mr. Elmer S. Crowley. Among the major productions of this season were *Second Fiddle* and *The Night of January 16*, the latter given by the Senior Class as the last major production of the year. An activity which has attracted much attention this spring is the Lunch Hour Theatre, sponsored by Thespians. A number of one-act plays and skits are given during the noon hours for the benefit of students who bring their lunches.

Bellefontaine, Ohio

TWO full-length play will make up the season of major production at the Bellefontaine High School (Thespian Troupe 100) under the direction of Miss Rachel McCarty. The first of these, *Own Town*, was given by the Junior Class in December. The Senior Class will give the second play which had not been chosen at the time of this writing. The season also included the production of an evening of one-act plays given on February 11, with two of the plays staged by Thespians. Thespians are entering the one-act, *Yet They Endure*, in the district drama festival schedule for April 4 at Springfield, Ohio.—*Joan Brady, Secretary.*

Mineral Ridge, Ohio

MEMBERS of Troupe No. 399 of the Mineral Ridge High School were awarded first-place honors in the county one-act play contest, held early in February with the play, *Balcony Scene*, written by Mr. Don Elser, troupe sponsor. The play was entered in the drama festival scheduled at Kent State University on April 17, 18. Eight new members were added to the troupe late in January. The first major play of the season, *Never Too Late*, was given by the Junior Class during the fall semester. The major play of the spring semester, *The Night of January 16*, is being produced under the sponsorship of the Senior Class. Members of the troupe forwarded their greetings and best wishes to the National Office by way of a recording during National Drama Week.—*Jerry Gilbert, Secretary.*

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For further information concerning these two scholarships, write Dean Howard H. Higgins, Emerson College, 130 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.

Goodman Memorial Theatre

WHILE the School of Drama of the Goodman Memorial Theatre of Chicago has no scholarships for undergraduates, students who have completed the certificate course are eligible for fourth-year scholarships if their work is of a markedly superior order. These scholarships—two for men and two for women—are awarded by the unanimous vote of the faculty.

Undergraduate students are eligible for Working Agreements which enable them to earn one-half or the whole of their tuition. These are granted only once a year at the beginning of the fall term. Applications must be in the office of the Registrar not later than July 1st. These applications are acted upon about August 1st. Working Agreement students are employed in various jobs about the theatre, usually of a nature which adds to their training. Because of the kind of work available, Working Agreements are awarded to men beginning in their first year and to women in the second.

(The working agreement is worth \$300.00 for full working agreements, and \$150.00 for half working agreements.)

Students holding working agreements do not have the requisite time for earning more than a small portion of their living costs outside of the theatre. We recommend that such students do not handicap themselves by trying to do any outside work. No student should come to the school planning to earn all his expenses.

Additional information may be secured from Louise Dale Spoor, Registrar, School of Drama, Goodman Memorial Theatre, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Ill.

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THE Schuster-Martin School of Drama is offering a Service Scholarship to young men for the school year 1942-43. The Service Scholarship consists of the full two-year professional course of training for Theatre and Radio. The service work is in the Stage Craft Department. It includes building, repairing, and painting of scenery, and stage and property management. Anyone wishing detailed information about the Service Scholarship will please write: Secretary, The Schuster-Martin School of Drama, Kemper Lane, Cincinnati, Ohio. A blank will be sent each applicant and should be filled out and returned to the school. Each application must be accompanied, or immediately followed, by at least three letters of recommendation from persons in authority in the town in which the applicant resides. These persons must be familiar with the applicant's talent and personal qualities.

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Jamestown, N. Y.

NATIONAL Drama Week in February was appropriately observed by members of Thespian Troupe No. 364 of the Jamestown High School. Fifteen new members were added to the troupe at a special ceremony which was attended by members of the school dramatics club and faculty. Thespians were in charge of the broadcast which was given over the local station later in the week. The Junior Class play, *Ever Since Eve*, given on February 20 proved extremely popular. A special project of this spring was the drama festival held on March 28, with a number of nearby schools participating. Thespians are also devoting much time this spring to the preparations of radio scripts on national defense as suggested in recent Thespian News-Letters. Mary Phyllis Moore was chosen Best Thespian for the fall semester. "There is a great interest in dramatics here but not enough time for all we want to do," writes Miss Myrtle L. Paetznick, troupe sponsor.

Topeka, Kas.

EIGHTY-FIVE students who make up the membership of Thespian Troupe No. 210 and the Masque and Wig Club at the Topeka, Kansas, High School attended a banquet celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Troupe during National Drama Week in February. The happy affair was under the general direction of Miss Gertrude S. Wheeler, troupe sponsor. Preceding the banquet eleven new members were added to the troupe. A mock ceremony added much humor to the occasion. The fact that the banquet came during National Drama Week did much to stimulate interest in dramatics throughout the school and community. Members of the dramatics department attended a performance of the motion picture, *Life With Father*, as a part of their activities for Drama Week. Troupe No. 210 has achieved the envi-

able record of thirty-two major productions during its ten years of existence. Hats off to Miss Wheeler, and the members of Troupe No. 210!

Dayton, Ohio

ENJOYING the honor of being the only club of its kind in the City of Dayton, members of the newly-established Troupe No. 493 at the Kiser High School now number twenty-one, with Mr. Robert W. Ensley as sponsor. Troupe meetings are held twice each month. For National Drama Week Thespians sponsored an assembly program for the benefit of the entire student body, consisting of a variety of dramatic skits from well-known plays. The program closed with a talk on the nature of the National Thespian Society and the requirements for membership. Activities at the time of this writing centered on the preparation of the Junior Class play which will be given this spring. All troupe activities are widely advertised in the school paper.—Helen Duderstade, Secretary.

Laramie, Wyo.

MEMBERS of Thespian Troupe No. 70 opened their dramatics season at the Laramie High School with the production of *Radio Mystery* on October 30. On December 12 the Junior Class followed with *Guest Room*, the second major production of the season. The third long play of the year, *Almost Eighteen*, will be staged by the Senior Class on May 1. As part of their program in observance of National Drama in February, Thespians presented two evenings of one-act plays, including *Lady of the Market Place*, *Who Gets the Car Tonight?*, *A Pair of Lunatics*, *Nobody Sleeps*, *Senior Freedom*, *And the Villian Still Pursued Her*, and *Everything Nice*. National Drama Week activities closed with a trip to the Rocky Mountain Speech Conference in Denver, Colo. *Hyacinths on Wheels* was entered in the State

ACTING

Written by Thespian Homer Gable of
Troupe No. 304, Welch, West Virginia,
High School.

EVERYONE, at some time or other, has done some acting. That is, one does things which are not original with the individual. When one goes to a movie and sees some tragic scene, the spectator is very much moved; at times to the extent of tears. Yet when entering a theatre, one is very conscious of the fact that he will see acting; and after having been affected emotionally—he is still aware that what he is seeing is not reality. He knows the actor wasn't really killed and that the situations did not actually occur. The primary purpose of this paper is to try to explain this mental contact between actor and audience.

In my opinion, two of the greatest assets toward effective acting are naturalness and sincerity.

When taking part in a play, one must do more than simply deliver the lines which someone else has written. He must really *be* that character. The ability to identify completely your personality with that of the person you are trying to portray is called character delineation, or characterization.

Visualize in your imagination the role the character is to play. See yourself acting, moving, looking as he would. Make him react naturally as he should under the circumstances which the dramatist has placed him.

Drama Festival held at the University of Wyoming on March 13. Thespians closed their season with an original production of a floor show early in April. Miss Velma Linford directs dramatics and sponsors Troupe No. 70.—Stanley Hunt, Secretary.

Celina, Ohio

THE first long play of the present season, *Spring Fever*, was given on December 4, 5, at the Celina High School (Thespian Troupe No. 473). The play was staged by the Junior Class. Thespians followed with a second major production of three one-act plays on January 27. The playbill included *The High Heart*, *Overhead*, and *Buddy Answers an Ad*. The Senior Class play on April 16, 17, *Barretts of Wimple Street*, brought the season to a close. The season also included the operetta, *The Mikado*, on November 3, 4, given by the Vocal Music Department. Mrs. Elna G. Hunter directs dramatics and Thespian activities at this school. Thirteen members were admitted to Thespian membership late in February.

Dover, Del.

MEMBERS of Thespian Troupe No. 489 of the Dover Community High School opened their activities in observance of National Drama Week in February with a meeting which was addressed by Mrs. Barry, make-up artist. After the address, members decided that the troupe should sponsor the production of several non-royalty plays during the remainder of the season. Several plays were discussed. To climax the week's program members of the troupe attended a performance of *Family Portrait* at the

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Hedgerow Theatre. Excerpts from this play were presented by the troupe in the spring drama festival at the University of Delaware. Thespians hold regular meetings with the members of the Drama Club each Thursday morning. Members of the troupe serve as chairmen of the various groups within the Drama Club. Thespians also meet each month at the home of one of the members. Mrs. Myrtle C. Cubbage, Thespian Regional Director for Delaware, supervises all dramatics activities in the school. Helpful suggestions are frequently given the club by Mr. George H. Henry. Several new members will be added to the Troupe before the close of school.—*Saralee Long, Secretary.*

Mishawaka, Ind.

THE SPIAN Troupe No. 496 was formally established in February at the Mishawaka High School, with ten charter members and Miss Emily K. Davidson as troupe sponsor. As their first project of the season, Thespians gave the one-act play, *The Wedding*, before the two sections of the school assembly. For their second project, Thespians offered a program on "Kinds of Drama" before the American Association of University Women. In April, after the production of the Sophomore Class play, a number of new members will be added to the troupe. "Our school is slowly becoming Thespian conscious and certainly will be wide awake to the purpose and accomplishments of the troupe by the close of school," writes Miss Davidson. At one time Miss Davidson sponsored the Thespian troupe at the Isaac C. Elston High School of Michigan City, Indiana.

Lewiston, Idaho

THE double cast system was used for the production of the *Call of the Banshee* at the Lewiston Senior High School (Thespian Troupe No. 76) on November 13 and 14. This was the first major play of the year. In

February Thespians gave *Sparkin'* for the school assembly. This play will be entered in the Thespian festival at the Couer d'Alene, Idaho, High School in May. Ten members were added to the troupe in February. A major event of the spring was the Bengal Follies program given on March 25, 26, 27, with over two hundred students participating. The production was directed by Miss Dorothea Thorkelson. Remaining activities for this season will include the production of the Senior Class play in May, with Miss Erma Young directing, a Thespian banquet, and a trip to Couer d'Alene for the spring frolic and festival. Miss Erma Young supervises all dramatics activities and sponsors Troupe No. 76. Officers of the Troupe are: George Haas, president; Marilyn Lester, vice-president; and Camille Isaman, treasurer.—*Vada Voggenthalen, Secretary.*

Custer, S. Dak.

THE season's dramatics activities opened on November 21 at the Custer High School with the production of the Junior Class play, *Gun-Shy*, under the direction of Miss Jane Rae. The fourth formal initiation of the Troupe No. 384 was held on December 18, with Miss Rae directing the program. After the impressive initiation before the student body, members of the Dramatics Class presented the one-act play, *The Ruggles Go To A Dinner Party*, given in observance of the Christmas season. Members of Troupe No. 384 assisted at the installation of the Troupe at Hot Springs, South Dakota, later in the year. A busy dramatics schedule is in progress this spring.

Aurora, Nebr.

THE production of *Smilin' Through*, on December 4, by the dramatics club and Thespians of the Aurora High School was regarded as one of the best in recent years. Although several obstacles had to be overcome

in providing the necessary scenery, the play proved very effective for students and audience alike. The fall semester also saw the production of several one-act plays given by the dramatics club, including *A King Shall Reign*, which was given for Christmas. As a special project, Thespians are devoting their meeting to the study of make-up. Thespians have also purchased a costume cabinet. Miss Loine Gaines is in charge of the dramatics department. An impressive Thespian initiation was held on February 5. Tables were in keeping with the patriotic theme used throughout the ceremony, with a large Uncle Sam hat centered on the table and small hats filled with mints used as favors.—*Virginia Fisher, Secretary.*

Deer Lodge, Mont.

THE Senior Class production of *The Show-Off*, on December 5, opened the 1941-42 season for the dramatics department of the Powell County High School (Thespian Troupe No. 22). A second major play will be given some time in April under the direction of Miss Edith B. Hamilton, troupe sponsor. Thespians have given five one-act plays so far this season. Thespians will also enter the drama tournament to be held at the University of Montana, in May. A project which has attracted much attention this season concerned the making of a file of all important articles which have appeared in THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN during the past several seasons. This file is now in the card index for reference whenever the occasion arises. An impressive ceremony on February 5 resulted in the addition of four new members to the troupe. The initiates were required to give various impersonations at a meeting held in the afternoon. In the evening the formal Thespian ceremony was held, with a banquet afterwards. The ceremony is always impressive and always well done.—*Lois Evans, Secretary.*



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The thrilling little masterpiece of patriotism from which this play has been adapted is too well-known to need introduction.

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The lesson in patriotism contained in this story is one that neither actors nor audience ever forget. The play has been given many performances by widely varying groups, such as Memorial day programs of World War veterans, senior and junior high schools and at boys' camps. It is easily cut or adapted to the special occasion for which it is to be used.

"The Man Without a Country" was given under my direction in our high school last year as part of the Memorial Day program. I should most certainly recommend it. . . . We shall not soon forget little "Singing Joe," or Nolan as he sat quietly talking to the boys on the deck." G. M. Warner, High School, East Orange, New Jersey.

Price: 35 cents. Royalty: \$10.00

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Mention The High School Thespian

Thank You

It has been a good season. We have had our share of THESPIAN business, and we are deeply appreciative of it. We hope you will be on the lookout for the 1943 catalog that will be issued next August. There will be some announcements in it that you will not want to miss. Best wishes.

Row, Peterson & Company

New York

Evanston, Illinois

San Francisco

Ashland, Ohio

NEW stage equipment consisting of a track, cyclorama, front curtain, window drapes, and lights were installed for the production of several one-act plays given in February in observance of National Drama Week at the Ashland High School (Troupe No. 29). The second major play of the season, *Double Door*, was given on March 19, 20. Plans are now being made for the production of *The Late Christopher Bean*, with which the year will come to a close. Under the direction of Mr. John I. Carlson, much progress has been made by the dramatics department this season.—*Marjorie Hetler, Secretary.*

Madison, S. Dak.

CHINA BOY, given on October 24, opened the present dramatics season for members of Troupe No. 302 of the Central High School, with Miss Mabel Phelps directing. The one-act play, *Who Gets the Car Tonight*, was given as a dramatics club project on November 21. Thespians are meeting regularly on the third Monday of each month. One-act plays are read and discussed at these meetings. Troupe officers elected recently are: Carol Caldwell, president; Bob Wadden, vice-president; and Jane Runchey, secretary-treasurer.

Pontiac, Mich.

MEMBERS of the Playcrafters Club of the Pontiac Senior High School, with Mr. W. M. Viola as director, have re-affiliated themselves with the National Thespian Society after an absence of two seasons. The Playcrafters have been granted Thespian Charter No. 499. Three one-act plays were presented at a parents' reception given by the club on January 21. The program also included a number of interesting exhibits, with Mary Jean Elliott as chairman. Six members of the club make up the charter roll of the new Troupe.

Other students are expected to become Thespians this spring.

Red Wing, Minn.

MAJOR plays given so far this season at the Red Wing High School (Thespian Troupe No. 213) are *You Can't Take It With You*, staged as the all-class play, on December 5, and *Ever Since Eve*, given by the Junior Class on March 6. As one of their own projects for the year, Thespians gave the one-act, *Death Sends For the Doctor*, late in January. Thespians also participated in the Minnesota Big-Nine Speech Festival on February 28 and in the Minnesota one-act play contest on March 24. Miss Esther Hoyer, dramatics director and troupe sponsor, writes that she is enjoying a very successful season.

Shenandoah, Iowa

MEMBERS of The James Esden Troupe No. 133 at the Shenandoah High School presented a program of three one-act plays on February 5, with Sponsor May Virden directing. The playbill consisted of *An Amateur Hamlet*, *Cassandra*, and *Thursday Evening*.

Fairview, W. Va.

THESPIAN meetings at the Fairview High School are held regularly on Wednesday evening twice each month, with Miss Mary Sturm in charge. *Midnight* was given early in the season as the first major play of the year. Thespians also sponsored the production of two one-act plays for assembly. Early in April the troupe presented the new one-act play, *Lemon Pie for Andy*, in the Thespian Regional Festival held at the East Fairmount High School. At the time of this writing members of the Senior Class were considering *Beginners' Luck* for production this spring. Troupe officers are: Keith Cosner, president; Kyle Swisher, vice-president, and Elizabeth Ann Kinsely, secretary.

THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN



THE exhibit shown at the left was staged by members of Troupe No. 468 of the Franklin School of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in observance of National Drama Week. New interest in dramatics was the result according to a report from Miss Geraldine Green, troupe sponsor.



IMPRESSIVE and dignified was the ceremony which formally established Thespian Troupe No. 495 at the Andrew Jackson High School of Miami, Florida, under the direction of Mrs. Marguerite Sweat Mills. Troupe No. 495 is the third to be established in the schools of Miami.



COMEDY was the theme of the initiation held by members of Troupe No. 156 of the Revere, Mass., High School early in December, with Miss June Hamblin and Emily L. Mitchell as co-sponsors. In the back row are representatives from the high schools at Arlington, Cambridge, and Everett, Mass.



SCENE from *Perrot, His Play* as staged by members of Troupe No. 254 at the B. M. C. Durfee High School of Fall River, Mass. Miss Barbara Wellington is the proud sponsor of this lively dramatics group. Miss Wellington is Regional Director for her state.

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By GEORGE SKLAR

Life and Death of an American, a drama of the hopes and ambitions of a working man, is here published for the first time. It was the last stage production of the Federal Theatre Project in New York, and was acclaimed by the drama critics as a play of striking power and brilliant characterization. Erwin Piscator, famous German director, called it "the most superb stage play I have seen in America." The late Sidney Howard considered it "the most alive and exciting play on the boards right now."

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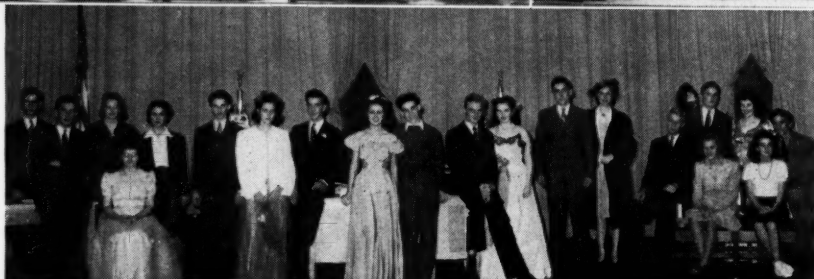
Mention *The High School Thespian*



(Top) Scene from *There Ain't No Mystery* at the Tonganoxie, Kansas, High School. (Troupe No. 379.) Directed by Miss Marian Williams.



(Top) Cast for the Variety Show patterned after *Hellzapoppin* at the Norfolk, Neb., High School. (Thespian Troupe No. 112.) Mr. Donley F. Feddersen, director.

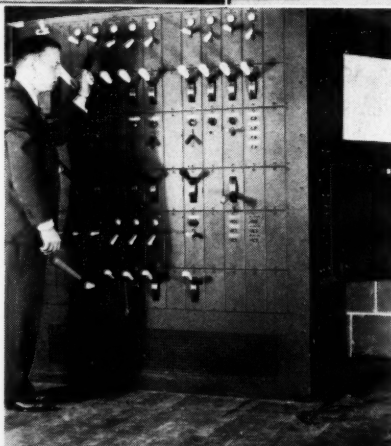


(Right) Cast for *You're Only Young Once* at the Messick High School of Memphis, Tenn. (Troupe No. 186.) Directed by Mrs. Lot-tye K. McCall.



(Right) Scene from *New Girl in Town* as staged by Thespian Troupe No. 373 at the Rainelle, West Virginia High School. Directed by Miss Lottie A. Williams.

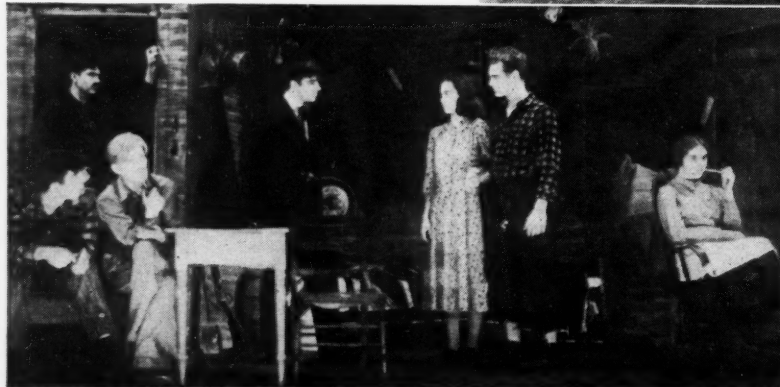
(Left) Scene from *Fresh Fields* as given by members of Thespian Troupe No. 333 at the Burlington, Wash., High School. Directed by Mr. John Lensrud.



(Left) Director Bernard D. Greeson inspects the new switchboard at the Centerville, Iowa, High School. Mr. Greeson sponsors Troupe No. 385 and serves as Regional Director for Iowa.

(Below) Scene from the production of *Sun-Up* by members of Thespian Troupe No. 450 of the Barracksville, West Virginia, High School. Directed by Miss Mabel M. Everley.

(Below) Thespian Troupe No. 385 at the Centerville, Iowa, High School which is sponsored by Mr. Greeson.



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Prepared by BLANDFORD JENNINGS

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Fayetteville, W. Va.

MEMBERS of Thespian Troupe No. 487 of the Fayetteville High School are enjoying a busy season in dramatics this spring. The program includes the sponsorship of the County Speech Festival at Fayetteville, participation in the County Play Festival and entry in the Thespian Regional Drama Festival at the Charleston High School on April 11. The Troupe entered *The Weatherman's Secret* in the Regional Drama Festival. The credit for this lively troupe goes to Miss Ruth Eary, troupe sponsor and founder. The troupe was established in December with fifteen students on the charter roll.

Ocala, Fla.

ACTIVITIES of Troupe No. 182 at the Ocala High School so far this season have included the production of *Bashful Bobby*, staged in February, a radio presentation of *The Christmas Carol* given before the entire student

body, and several projects sponsored in conjunction with the regular dramatics club. A major event of this spring is the Senior Class play which is being directed by Mr. Samuel Eff, troupe sponsor. Several students will qualify for membership before the year comes to a close.

Hot Springs, S. Dak.

EIGHT students became charter members of Troupe No. 488, established at the Hot Springs High School under the direction of Miss Alice G. Brittan. The formal installation of the troupe was conducted by members of Troupe No. 384 of Custer, South Dakota. Troupe officers are: Roy Donegon, president; Bue Craft, vice-president, and Gerald Nollett, treasurer. As their first project Thespians sponsored an evening of one-act plays in February, consisting of *Farewell Cruel World*, *A Shot in the Dark*, and *Cousin Ann*. Much time this spring was spent on the production of the

play, *Mother Buys a Bond*, staged as a National Defense program.—Bonnie Larive, Secretary.

Cumberland, Md.

THESPIAN Troupe No. 230 of the Fort Hill High School continues its excellent program under the leadership of Miss Gerardine Pritchard. The present season has included the production of the annual tournament plays with grades 10, 11, and 12 participating. Plays entered in the tournament were *Darkness*, given by the Seniors with student Virginia Lee Van Sant directing, *So Wonderful in White*, staged by the Juniors with student Margaret Staller directing, and *His First Party Dress*, presented by the Sophomores, with Betty Golden directing. The Sophomores were given first place honors. The spring program will include the May Day Pageant. Thespians played leading parts in the production of the three-act play, *The Eyes of Tlaloc*, directed by Miss Pritchard. Sixteen students were admitted to membership late in February.

What's New Among Books and Plays

EDITED BY H. T. LEEPER

Review Staff: Donald Woods, Blandford Jennings, Marion Stuart, Kari Natalie Reed, Elmer S. Crowley, Mary Ella Bovee, Helen Movius and Virginia Leeper.

Reviews appearing in this department aim to help our readers keep up with recent books and plays. The opinions expressed are those of the reviewer, and mention of a book or play in this department does not necessarily mean that such a publication is recommended by THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN.

Row, Peterson and Company, Evanston, Ill.

Senor Freedom, by Jean Lee Latham. Drama. One act. 2 m., 3 w. Timely and timeless is this play. It's based on the thought that so long as one man can keep a trust, freedom shall not die. When Dolores sees the pigeon she names him Senor Freedom. Just how he is permitted to keep his title is told in a highly dramatic and gripping story. The characterizations are well drawn and the lines moving. It is an excellent play.—*Marion Stuart*.

Nobody Sleeps, by Guernsey LePelley. Comedy. One act. 1 m., 4 w. Spike, a burglar, and not a very good one, enters the home of Mrs. Busby with intentions of robbing it. He is completely out-witted by her three daughters, and later by Mrs. Busby herself. She is a novelist who has a passion for writing mystery stories. Clever lines and good action. Sufficiently light to be a good morale builder.—*Marion Stuart*.

Everything Nice, by A. A. O'Keeffe. Comedy. One act. 2 m., 5 w. Two little sisters, Bennie and Hennie, make life merry for their family and particularly their older sister, Cornelia. They start by publishing her diary in their weekly newspaper, thereby causing all sorts of trouble with her boy-friend, Clifford. They do not stop with the family but transpose pictures of the Mayor on government posters, advertising and offering awards for criminals. They have more ambition than twenty and keep the family in continual hot water. Light and good entertainment of particular appeal to families.—*Marion Stuart*.

Recipe for Love, a comedy in one act, by E. Clayton McCarty. 2 m., 2 w. A delightful comedy of a love starved high-school girl and her none-too-romantic, awkward boy-friend. The girl has aspirations to become a love story writer and calls on her favorite writer. The scene that enfolds is highly entertaining and great fun.—*Harley Fortier*.

When Amantha Comes, by Sara Sloane McCarty. One act. Scene is living room in Kentucky mansion. 4m., 3 w. Story of an old Southern family that is growing away from its pleasant traditions. Parents trying to stay young, pleasure bent older children. All is brought to sweetness and light when they decide to remain home on Christmas Eve to receive a guest, whose letter came 70 years too late.—*Harley Fortier*.

The Farnsworth Nose, a comedy in one act, by E. Clayton McCarty. 2 m., 3 w. A cleverly worked out plot built on a daughter in high school, whose choice of a boy-friend is, to say the least, distressing to the family. A grandfather, who is a most likeable character, comes through with what is hoped to be the solution.—*Harley Fortier*.

History Makers, a collection of eight radio plays by Robert D. Henry and James Lynch, Jr. No royalty. This collection is designed for use in teaching the fundamentals of broadcasting and an appreciation of American history. They are excellent for the purpose intended and are good enough for regular broadcasting, although I believe they are a trifle short for the usual quarter hour program.—*Harry T. Leeper*.

The Northwestern Press, 2200 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, Minn.

Time's Up, a comedy in three acts, by Robert Ray. 7 m., 6 w. Royalty, \$10. Mrs.

Peterson is the very much neglected mother of a typical middle-class family. Her doctor tells the family that she is going to die. The panic-stricken family showers her with attention and care such as she has never had before, and she becomes too busy enjoying being the center of attention to worry about the grim reaper. Then, another doctor reports that there is nothing whatever wrong with her, and she must decide whether to keep the family worried or to tell them and have them relapse into their selfish ways. This is a "different" comedy and will give the audience something serious to think about as well as clever lines to laugh at.—*Harry T. Leeper*.

Cap and Gown, a comedy in three acts, by Dana Thomas. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$25.00. Another of Mr. Thomas' interesting family plays, this time dealing with the present-day interest in adult education. Father is trying to stretch the budget to cover the cost of sending his three children through school, and at the same time get the college education he didn't get in his youth. When his son is accused of the theft and sale of examination papers, father attempts to take the blame, which will mean that he will not be allowed to get his prized diploma. Junior's girl friend saves the day by uncovering the real culprit.—*Harry T. Leeper*.

Samuel French, 22 West 45th Street, New York City.

Mr. and Mrs. North, a comedy in three acts, by Owen Davis. 16 m., 4 w. Royalty quoted on application. A lively mystery-comedy, featuring the feather-headed Mrs. North and her puzzled husband. Full of clever lines. Only for advanced groups, since the characters are mostly sophisticated and mature.—*Blandford Jennings*.

Peter, a comedy-drama in three acts, by James Worthing. 5 m., 5 w. Royalty, \$10. A "Passing of the Third Floor Back" theme—the mysterious stranger who by saying the right thing at the right time reforms the young brother who is an embryo gangster, causes the girl to choose rightly between two men, and so on. The play necessarily tends more towards talk than action, and some of the conversions seem a bit too easy; but it might be convincing and even moving if well done. Obviously aimed at church schools and religious groups.—*Blandford Jennings*.

Wings of the Eagle, a melodrama in three acts, by Pete Williams. 7 m., 7 w. Royalty, \$10. This play is interesting because it deals with a field somewhat new to amateur drama, and greatly in the public eye at present, that of aviation. The story is of the Intermountain Airways, who must maintain a month's unbroken flight schedule to win the mail contract vital to its staying in business. Trigger Jarvis, an irresistible, irresponsible pilot of the old school, turns up at the right time to be able to help his friend of barnstorming days, Dan Tyler, now manager of the Airways. Mechanical failures and well-timed accidents point to sabotage, and so to Trigger, the newcomer of the staff. However, in the last of the trial flights Trigger's loyalty is proved when he loses his life to bring in the mail, at the same time giving Dan's brother a chance to prove he is not yellow, and bringing about the discovery of the real saboteurs. A plot well built and thrilling, and well-drawn characters, make this play very much worth using.—*Virginia Leeper*.

Longmans, Green and Company, 55 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Four Daughters, a comedy in three acts, based upon the First National motion picture of the same title. Dramatized by Frank Vreeland. Royalty on application. 5m., 5 w., and extras. Briefly, the story concerns the household of Adam Lemp, music teacher, composed of four charming daughters, with widely differing personalities, and a maiden aunt. Upon this household descend two young men—a personable young music composer and a drifting, fate-ridden musical genius. There are warm, human sacrifices on the part of members of this household; there are swift-moving events which lead up to an intense and highly satisfactory climax of tragic proportions, though the final short scene of Act II leaves one with the feeling of a happy, though not weak, ending. This is truly one of the most thoroughly delightful comedies of today, with unusually fine conversation throughout. The comedy is neither attempted nor achieved—it just naturally "happens". The music and vocal effects which form such an important element of atmosphere in this comedy can be easily done by records, instrumental trios, and vocalists off-stage. *Four Daughters* is really "good theatre" in any director's language.—*Mary Ella Bovee*.

White Banners, a three-act drama, dramatized by Frank Vreeland, from the motion picture of the same title which was adapted from the novel by Lloyd C. Douglas. 6 m., 4 w., extras. Royalty on application.

Lovable, human and beautifully written. Out of the winter storm comes Hannah into the Ward family. In her quiet, unpossessing manner, she teaches the doctrine of love to the family, earning for herself the title of friend and counselor. One of her successes is directing Peter, an over-confident, rich man's son, into leading a useful life. When her work is completed she leaves the family as quietly as she entered into their lives. Characterizations are complete and challenging. Highly recommended for a worthwhile high school production.—*Marion Stuart*.

Dramatic Publishing Company, 59 East Van Buren Street, Chicago, Ill.

A Very Grammatical Family, a comedy in one act, by Albert Carriere. 7 b., 7 g. Non-royalty for amateurs. A very clever, light-hearted little play that teaches the eight parts of speech in painless fashion. It could be used from the middle grades on through high school without being too difficult or too childish for either. For high schools it offers wide possibilities for individual acting and almost any degree of stylized setting and ingenious lighting.—*Harry T. Leeper*.

Walter H. Baker Company, 178 Tremont St., Boston, Mass.

There Ain't No Mystery, a three-act play, by John Nash. 5 m., 6 w. Non-royalty. The play, dealing with mysterious happenings at the Megyntic Sport Club, is a hilarious comedy from beginning to end. It has many fine character parts of the type to add variety and please the audience, but not so difficult as to make hardships on high school students and coaches.

The cast is not so large that it is hard to manage, but at the same time is large enough to draw a good crowd. Filled with many unusual and unexpected events, the play tangles in its net of circumstances six young sports club members who have been trying to have a good time and have also been "trying" the patience of Mom Elkins. Besides good characterization the play has clean, amusing dialogue.—*Marion L. Williams*.

He Passed This Way, an Easter play in three acts, by Margaret Ann Hubbard. 7 w., 10 m., extras, one set. Royalty, \$5. An interesting version of the two thieves. An original plot combined with Biblical facts. Needs cutting.—*Erna Kruckemeyer*.



Scene from *Heart Trouble* as staged by members of Troupe No. 324 at the Wyoming, Illinois, High School. Directed by Miss Margaret L. Meyn.

Come To Dinner, a three-course comedy, by Kurtz Gordon. 7 w., 4 m. (one minor). Royalty, \$10. This new play offers plenty of entangling situations; good conversation, accompanied by lively action; and likeable, human characters, despite the fact that they are more or less "type" roles. The play moves swiftly on, as no change of locale or lapse of time is required between acts. Though the whole play can be easily handled by amateurs, the result cannot be considered so much wasted effort. In other words, the play is "easy," without being "simple." The author has produced one of the most amusing characters of the current high school dramatic season in Eleanor Blaine, scatterbrained wife of Bill Blaine, who bears a close resemblance to Sheridan's Mrs. Malaprop. Mrs. Blaine takes under her wing first one protegee and then another, much to the disgust

Books Received and Contents Noted

SHAKESPEARE WITHOUT TEARS, by Margaret Webster. Stimulating, timely, authoritative Whittlesey House. \$2.75.
SPEECH PREPARATION AND DELIVERY, by Thonssen and Scanlan. Recommended for college classes. Lippincott. \$2.50.
HANDBOOK ANNUAL OF THE THEATRE, by Wilbur Dingwell. Extremely handy for the busy director. This volume covers the season from May, 1940, to May, 1941. Coward-McCann. \$2.50.
THE DESTROYERS, LIFE AND DEATH OF AN AMERICAN. The first publications of the "Living Drama Series" edited by William Kozlenko. The John Day Company. \$2.00 each.

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of her husband; but the companion of her present protegee turns out to be a former chorus girl, with whom Bill has been innocently involved. Matters are further complicated by the presence of Jennie Baldwin, Eleanor's social rival; Martin Finn, in love with the lovely daughter of the household; and Selina, housemaid, bound on reaching Hollywood. This is a play that any group will take pleasure in producing, as it wears well during the rehearsal period.—*Mary Ella Bovee*.

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Our Periodicals in Review

REVIEWED BY MRS. HARRISON J. MERRILL

Formerly Director of Dramatics, State Teachers College, California, Pa.

MERLIN OF THE MOVIES. By Henry A. Reese. *Saturday Evening Post* for February 28, 1942. Like the real Merlin, Maurice Seiderman, make-up artist for the motion pictures, transforms his subjects in greater detail than any other person of his profession. Being a true inventor, he has created plastics which replace the obvious rubber covering for the face and hair used by others. If you saw *Citizen Kane*, you will recall that, as Orson Welles grew older, his head became bald, instead of his hair becoming thicker and bushier with artificial gray hair. For three months before the filming of this picture, he made plaster casts of Mr. Welles head from which he made 20 models, depicting each minute change in his make-up. Mr. Seiderman not only is an artist but he is a true scientist, a creative genius. This would be a valuable article to review at your next Thespian meeting.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE COLLEGE DRAMATIC STUDENT. By Robert Gates Dawes. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* for February, 1942. Senior Thespians may gain an insight into a possible future for their dramatic activity. While Professor Dawes of Ohio University condemns the lack of preparation of the average collegiate dramatics teacher, he contends that the class in Play Production serves to introduce the interested student to the field of drama. Most Speech students, he maintains, have no interest in entering the realm of the professional theater. They take Play Production to become teachers, community theater workers, drama critics, doctors, lawyers, and even housewives. There seems to be no field in which dramatics cannot be useful as well as a source of added pleasure.

A CASE AGAINST THE CRITICS. By George Jean Nathan. *American-Mercury* for February, 1942. Young playwrights will be relieved to hear that Mr. Nathan does not condemn writers who ape their predecessors. In defense of a young playwright, Alexander Greendale, who reportedly copied Clifford Odets's style, he makes a number of citations of other such plagiarisms. O'Neill admittedly acknowledged his debt to Strindberg; Synge to Yeats; and Gorki to Tolstoi. He condemns his fellow colleagues for favoring *Junior Miss* and damning Greendale's *Walk Into My Parlor*.

VERSE CHOIR AT WILLIAM WOOD'S COLLEGE. By Charlotte I. Lee. *Junior College Journal* for January, 1942. Thespian directors who have not had experience with choric speaking should at least read this article and give it some consideration.

It was Gordon Bottomley, English poet and playwright, who first suggested choric speaking to Marjorie Gullan of the Speech Institute in London. Her first attempt met with such success that she has now earned an enviable reputation throughout the English-speaking world.

Taken from a purely therapeutic standpoint, choric training can accomplish much. It improves the speaking voice, articulation, interpretation; yes, even bodily movement. The author has given suggestions for developing such a group and by her clear explanations has solved many problems for the beginning director. She also reassures one that special training in the dance is not necessary, but rather a sense of rhythm and an imagination will guide one in artistic and effective movements.

WHAT IS THE EFFECT OF PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR DRAMATICS ON SCHOLASTIC ACHIEVEMENT? By John E. Dietrich. *Quarterly Journal of Speech* for February, 1942.

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Here are some statistics that you directors have been waiting for in convincing your principal that dramatics is not overstressed in your school. Perhaps you can even get him to read this article.

Although Professor Dietrich carried on his experiment at the University of Purdue, his findings are easily paralleled in secondary schools.

He found that, though the man hours increased just preceding each play, the number of workers also increased, thus very little additional time was added to the schedule of each individual. As a whole, the dramatic students seemed to be better students than those not participating. This conclusion was also reached from a similar study made at the University of Wisconsin. The amount of time dramatic students spent seemed to have no effect upon them, and their class work did not change in calibre when not working on a play. Nor did their work fall behind during the semester only to catch up at the end. These are indeed important findings and valuable arguments for dramatics.

MAURICE EVANS. By Theodore Strauss. *Theatre Arts* for March, 1942. Maurice Evans and his director, Margaret Webster, have probably done more to bring about a renaissance of Shakespeare on the American stage than any other living persons. The Bard has shaken off his academic cloak and become a living, dynamic force in our theatre.

Of the five plays acted by Maurice Evans, Mr. Strauss considers his *Richard II* his best. But he has brought clarity, understanding, and excitement to all of them.

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MORE NEWS OF ENGLAND. By Wolcott Gibbs. *New Yorker*, February 21, 1942. While this article leads up to a review of the current Broadway play, *Heart of a City*, there are some good suggestions for playwrights eager to deal with the English under the blitz. Mr. Gibbs feels that all of the plays thus far have made their heroes noble but have failed to make them human beings. While the material and data included in the lines have been historically correct, the authors have been unable to catch the real spirit of the English people.

GRAND CURTAIN LINES. By George Jean Nathan. *Liberty* for March 7, 1942. Not only will you Thespians find this article interesting reading, but those of you who are trying your hand at playwrighting will glean hints on what constitutes a good curtain line. Mr. Nathan has chosen the final speeches of several of the better contemporary plays as illustrations. Among the playwrights included are: S. N. Behrman, Hecht-MacArthur, Yeats, Kaufman, Wilder, Saroyan, Shaw, and Houseman.

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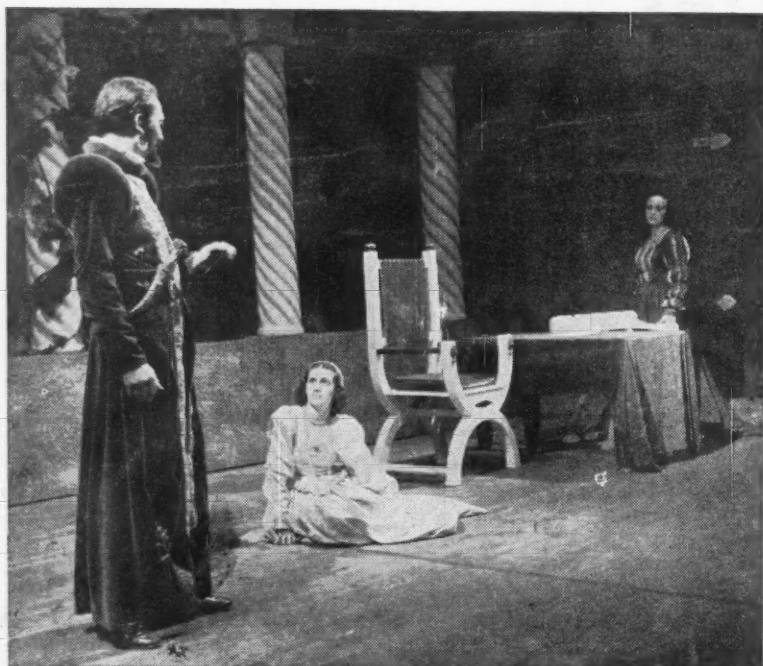
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